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SWEDENBORG

AND

THE NEW CHURCH.

BY

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PREFACE.

THE author has been, of late years, often reminded of a growing desire, on the part of intelligent persons in the community, for a brief and clear statement of the principal teachings of Swedenborg. In the hope of meeting this want, the following lectures were prepared and delivered, and are now in a permanent form offered to the public.

BOSTON, *January* 27, 1880.

CONTENTS.

FIRST LECTURE.

PAGE

SWEDENBORG AND THE NEW CHURCH . . . 7

SECOND LECTURE.

THE SACRED SCRIPTURES 25

THIRD LECTURE.

THE DIVINE NATURE AND PROVIDENCE . . 44

FOURTH LECTURE.

THE INCARNATION AND REDEMPTION . . . 60

FIFTH LECTURE.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND REGENERATION . . 78

SIXTH LECTURE.

THE SPIRITUAL WORLD 96

SEVENTH LECTURE.

DEATH, RESURRECTION, AND JUDGMENT . . 115

EIGHTH LECTURE.

MARRIAGE 129

SWEDENBORG AND THE NEW CHURCH.

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FIRST LECTURE.

SWEDENBORG AND THE NEW CHURCH.

MOST well-informed persons, at the present day, have heard of Emanuel Swedenborg, and of the doctrinal system which is usually coupled with his name; but it may be truly said that very few know much about them. On this, as on many other subjects, the great majority of people are content with what they may gather from hearsay, or from the vague, general impressions of others. Though they may no longer regard Swedenborg as a madman, and his writings as a tissue of insane dreamings, yet they have scarcely any idea of the true nature and scope of the doctrines he unfolds.

But to those who have read, and understand and accept, these doctrines, they seem to be of the utmost magnitude and importance. They do not differ from other doctrines on any single point, or on any few points, which might be quickly mentioned; but they appear to bring new light to bear on all points. It is not any mere

sectarian distinction which they indicate, but the dawning of a new age, and the beginning of a new Christianity.

The term "New Church" is constantly employed by Swedenborg to designate this new order of things; which, at the time when he wrote, he declared to be at hand. By it is meant not simply the substitution of one system of religion for another among men, but a radical change in their habits of thought and modes of life, a renewal of the mental and spiritual air which they breathe, a fresh impulse and direction given to all their efforts and activities. The New Church, in a broad, general sense, does not consist of those alone who professedly receive the new doctrines, but includes men and women in every part of the world who are, directly or indirectly, sensibly or insensibly, affected by the new influences. Swedenborg stands before us as the herald of a new age, and his writings as an exposition of its distinctive religious truth.

These are great claims, it will be truly said, and should be admitted only upon the weightiest evidence. Ought they to be accepted on the bare authority of Swedenborg or any other man?

To this question, so frequently asked, I would give the most emphatic answer. No man, however good and wise, should be blindly followed in matters of opinion or belief. Swedenborg him-

self would be the last among men to assume any such personal authority. It is laid down in his writings as a cardinal principle that man should act in freedom according to reason. Religion furnishes no ground of exception to this rule. Unless one has perfect freedom of thought, and is able to satisfy his own reason, he can have no genuine faith in any doctrine. Though he profess, he does not truly believe. But, if a doctrine or principle is seen to be true in itself, no matter whence it comes, or with what name it is associated; no matter how many or how few may join us in embracing it; if we are free and untrammelled in the exercise of the rational faculties which the Lord has given us, we shall adopt it for its own intrinsic worth, and say nothing about authority. It seems to us to be of God.

On these grounds, and on no others, the doctrines of the New Church, as contained in the theological works of Swedenborg, are valued by those who receive them. And, as was said, they constitute an entire new system of theology, which touches on every conceivable point of belief. They let in a flood of light upon the Scriptures, enabling us to understand better who our Heavenly Father is, what are the purposes of his creation and the character of his government, and how we may be prepared for heaven. They explain to us the constitution of the human mind, and thus help us to know ourselves. They

open before the mind's eye the spiritual world as it has never hitherto been opened. In short, they give more comprehensive and spiritual views of all things.

Still there may be a natural and proper desire to know something about the man in whose writings these doctrines are to be found. Let us, therefore, at this time consider briefly who and what he was.

Emanuel Swedenborg was born at Stockholm, Sweden, January 29, 1688, or nearly two hundred years ago. His name at first was not Swedenborg, but Swedberg, and he was the son of Jesper Swedberg, bishop of Skara, in West Gothland. His father is spoken of as a man of "piety, learning, integrity, benevolence, and all other virtues." It is an interesting fact, that for many years he (the father) superintended a Swedish mission on this continent, in and about the State of Delaware.

"A son of Bishop Swedberg," says Sandel, who pronounced Swedenborg's eulogy, "could not fail to receive a good education according to the custom of the times, and such as was adapted to form his youth to virtue, to industry, to solid knowledge, and especially to those sciences which were to constitute his chief occupation." The sciences here referred to are the natural sciences, to which in the early part of his life he gave special attention, and which, in the estimation of

this eulogist, were the principal ground of his celebrity. He studied first in the Swedish university of Upsal, and afterwards, during four successive years, in the universities of England, Holland, France, and Germany.

When he was twenty-eight years old, he was appointed, by King Charles XII., Assessor Extraordinary of his Board of Mines. This board is a constitutional branch of the Swedish government; and the position of assessor is compared by an English biographer to that of president of the British Board of Trade. There can be no doubt that it was a post of great honor and responsibility. Swedenborg unquestionably owed his appointment at so early an age to his attainments in mathematical and mechanical science; and it is to be remarked that until he was about sixty years old he devoted his time almost exclusively to scientific pursuits. During this period he published many scientific works of great value, in which he anticipated a number of important discoveries, which are commonly ascribed to more recent investigators. Nor did he disdain to join practical with theoretical science. It is related that on one occasion he was of great service to the king by transporting over valleys and mountains, by the help of machines of his own invention, two galleys, five large boats, and a sloop, for a distance of about fourteen English miles.

He received during his lifetime many marks

of distinction, and probably there were few of his countrymen who were as widely and favorably known. In the year 1719, when he was about thirty years of age, his family was raised to the rank of nobility, and his name was changed from Swedberg to Swedenborg. He thus became a member of the Equestrian Order of the House of Nobles, and was entitled to a seat in the diets of the realm, where he always conducted himself in such a way as to gain the respect of all classes of men.

There is abundant evidence that his mind was always interested in spiritual and religious matters. He says of himself, in a letter written to his friend, Dr. Beyer: "From my fourth to my tenth year, my thoughts were constantly engrossed by reflecting upon God, on salvation, and on the spiritual affections of man. I often revealed things in my discourse which filled my parents with astonishment, and made them declare at times that certainly the angels spoke through my mouth. From my sixth to my twelfth year, it was my greatest delight to converse with the clergy concerning faith, to whom I have often observed that charity or love was the life of faith, and that this vivifying charity or love was no other than the love of one's neighbor; that God vouchsafes this faith to every one; but that it is adopted by those only who practise that charity." Throughout his scientific works there is a

manifest seeking after things higher than nature. By means of a knowledge of the body he was always striving to rise to a knowledge of the soul, and even beyond. This class of his writings comes to a fitting culmination and conclusion in the treatise entitled, "The Worship and Love of God," published in 1744.

Up to this time, however, he had written nothing of a professedly theological or religious character. But in the following year began the period of what is generally known as his illumination. He himself speaks of it as follows: "From this day forth I gave up all merely worldly learning, and labored only in spiritual things, according to what the Lord commanded me to write." He straightway applied himself, although he was fifty-seven years of age, to the acquisition of the Hebrew language, in order that he might be able to study the Old Testament in its original tongue. He then read the Bible through several times, for this was to be the great source of the light which he was to receive and communicate to mankind.

Five years after the issue of his last philosophical treatise, and four years from the date of his illumination, appeared the first volume of the "Arcana Cœlestia," the largest as well as the earliest of his theological works. The last of the eight quarto volumes of which it consisted was given to the public about nine years afterwards. The "Arcana" is principally an exposition of

the *spiritual meaning* of the books of Genesis and Exodus, and its publication at that time is a striking indication of the fact that the leading object of his mission was to unfold the Scriptures, and to reveal the divinity within them.

Between the year 1749, when the first volume of the "Arcana" was published, and the year 1772, in which Swedenborg died, he printed and put in circulation no less than twenty-four volumes, large and small, beside writing many others which were found in manuscript form after his death. When we consider the profound character of these works, and his advanced age (he was eighty-two years old before the last volume was published), we must regard the performance of such an amount of labor as a remarkable achievement. Then further, although most of his time during these years must necessarily have been spent in solitary study, he was not averse to society nor neglectful of his public duties. Count Hopken, at one time prime minister of Sweden, testifies that "the most solid memorials, and the best penned, at the diet of 1761, on the matters of finance, were presented by him." This practice was in perfect harmony with his precepts, which uniformly urge the importance of a useful life among men as one of the first religious obligations.

The excellence of Swedenborg's life and character is proved by the abundant testimony of his

contemporaries. It may be remarked in passing, that certain charges of immorality contained in the larger biography of White have been shown to be entirely groundless. These four rules which he had prescribed for his conduct, and which were found noted down in several of his manuscripts, will tell what manner of man he was: "Often to read and meditate on the Word of God; to submit everything to the will of Divine Providence to observe in everything a propriety of behavior, and always to keep the conscience clear; to discharge with fidelity the functions of my employments and the duties of my office, and to render myself in all things useful to society."

In all his writings the Scriptures are placed prominently before us. His statements with respect to important doctrines are repeatedly confirmed by numerous passages from the Old and New Testaments. Never for a moment is the Bible out of sight. He himself says: "I testify in truth — that from the first day of (my) call I have not received anything that pertains to the doctrines of the (New) church from any angel, but from the Lord alone, while I was reading the Word." That is to say: While he was meditating on the Scriptures, divine light flowed down into his mind, giving him a clear perception of their interior significance. He was not inspired. The prophets were inspired; and when they wrote or uttered the Scriptures, their tongue was

the pen of a ready writer, whose divine words they were empowered to communicate. He was not commissioned to reveal a new Word, but to make the former Word, the everlasting Gospel, bright and clear. And first of all, it was made bright and clear to him. He but expressed, in his own language, according to the best of his ability, the wonderful truths which he saw. We can suppose his condition to have been like that of the twelve disciples, when, after his resurrection, the Lord opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, and unfolded to them from the law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms, things concerning Himself, which had previously lain concealed.

It is important to remember that the highest claim which is made by Swedenborg, or can be rightly made by any one on his behalf, is that he was a truly enlightened expositor of Scripture, and was therefore the herald of a new dispensation of Christianity. There is nothing in all his teachings which does not reverently point us to the Scriptures and help us to understand, to love and to venerate them as we never did before. It is indeed believed that he had unusual spiritual experiences; that, as he declares, the eyes of his spirit were opened, and he had constant communication with the inhabitants of the other world. But this was a secondary matter, quite subordinate to the main purpose of revealing the inner

meaning of the divine Word. Yet it was of great service in enabling him to understand clearly the things which he was to reveal; for the internal sense of Scripture relates to the higher and heavenly life of man — to the spiritual, not the natural, order and conditions of his being. Swedenborg's case must be regarded as exceptional, on account of the peculiar work which he had to do. He is emphatic in his testimony as to the danger of open intercourse with spirits. Hence those who are influenced by his teachings can have no sympathy with the spiritualists, so called, nor any faith in the virtue of their real or pretended manifestations. The only genuine source of divine truth to men is the written Word of God.

The fact can hardly be questioned, that there now exists in the minds of professed Christians a degree of doubt and uncertainty with respect to the Scriptures, and all doctrines founded on them, which is quite unprecedented. And if we may judge from appearances, this scepticism is daily on the increase. Nor is it at all to be wondered at; for with the increase of knowledge and the prevalence of independent thought have arisen new emergencies which the former views of the Christian church are but ill prepared to encounter. The testimony of modern science seems to come into direct antagonism with the Scriptures. When, for example, the book of Genesis teaches that the earth was created in six days,

and geology declares that hundreds of centuries were spent in the formation of its crust, the Bible appears to be set directly at defiance. Some still adhere tenaciously to the literal Scripture record, making light of this meddlesome, new-born science; while others, unable to disbelieve the evidence of their senses, are deaf to the still, small voice in their hearts which tells them, albeit feebly, that the Word of the Lord is truth. Between these two extreme parties is doubtless a larger class than either, which is honestly seeking to reconcile the manifest discrepancy, but finds itself sorely puzzled and perplexed.

Not only the geologist, but the astronomer, comes and bears record of the immutable laws which govern nature. The earth revolves on its axis, turning toward the sun in regular and changeless succession, now one part of its surface and now another. Thus, and thus alone, is produced the endless alternate sequence of day and night. Yet the account in Genesis speaks of three days which passed before the sun was created, and says, moreover, that on the very first day "God divided the light from the darkness, and God called the light day, and the darkness he called night." In other words, day and night existed three days before the sun itself.

Again, an astronomer is not needed to discover that the life and growth of all animals and vegetables are dependent on the solar heat and light.

In the arctic circle, which is reached by the sun's rays but remotely and partially, the forms of life in either of these two great natural kingdoms are, comparatively, but few in number, and mostly of the lower orders; while the fertile regions of the tropics bring forth in such luxuriant abundance as to defy all efforts at description. Take away the sun, and it is evident that all material things must perish. Yet it is written in the Scripture record, that before there was any sun, the earth brought forth grass, herbs, and trees.

Still another doubt comes up with regard to the parentage of the human race. Have all men descended from one and the same pair, or not? Many scientific investigators of unquestioned ability and influence declare it impossible that such should have been the origin of the various races of mankind, which, so far as all visible signs go, were always as clearly distinct and as widely different from each other as they are now. Furthermore, the ostensible teachings of the Bible on this point, if they are not in themselves absolutely inconsistent, are certainly quite involved and obscure. To begin with, it must be remembered that Adam is the common Hebrew word which means man, and it is almost always so rendered in the Scriptures. Now the first place where it is mentioned is in the opening chapter of Genesis, and there it is said that "God created (Adam or) man in his own image, in the

image of God created He him; male and female created He *them*." Thus on the sixth day of creation it would appear that the human family was called into being, and, like all the lower races, consisted of males and females. So, too, at the beginning of the fifth chapter we read: "In the day that God created man (or Adam), in the likeness of God made He him; male and female created He *them;* and blessed *them*, and called *their* name (man or) Adam in the day when *they* were created." In this passage we seem indisputably to be taught not only that man was created male and female from the very first, but also that Adam was a generic term, including both sexes, and applied to both at the time of their creation. But quite different conclusions would naturally be drawn from the narrative contained in the second and third chapters, which describe the garden of Eden, the temptation, the eating of the forbidden fruit, the fall, and the expulsion from Paradise. One man, named Adam, is represented as the first of created beings. After he has lived for a while alone, Jehovah God forms one of his ribs into a woman called Eve. And they twain are the parents of the human race. Surely if all these things are taken into consideration, the literal sense of the Bible cannot be said to settle the question whether man was first planted in one or many stocks.

Again, what kind of a process was it, by

which our first parents are reputed to have entailed the heritage of everlasting perdition upon their numberless descendants? The serpent (not a factitious serpent, be it remembered, but one that is expressly classed among the beasts of the field,— a veritable reptile, condemned to go upon his belly all the days of his life) breaks his accustomed silence, and with seductive whisper prevails upon Eve, and she on Adam, to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge. One cannot well allow himself to think upon this story without concluding that, as a recital of literal facts, it is altogether improbable, not to say impossible. And when we consider the tremendous and awful effects which are said to have followed from apparently so trivial a cause, we must either confess ourselves overwhelmed with doubts, or else filled with a terrified wonder at the strange Providence which, after all that had happened, still permitted the wayward pair to people the world with a progeny that was doomed to endless misery through their transgression.

But we need not multiply examples. Enough have been enumerated to serve the purpose of showing that many and grave difficulties stand in the way of a correct understanding of Scripture, and cannot be removed by any ordinary method of interpretation. Light, more light, is called for on the subject of the Scriptures. Men are asking of one another, but chiefly of their

own hearts, "What are the Scriptures? Are they truly the Lord's Word to his children? Are they his ever-present voice sounding through the ages, full of wisdom, infinite in power, unquestionable in authority? Or do we see in them only the useless relics of a bygone time, the dying embers of an old superstition?" Right here, on the ground indicated by these questions, the great spiritual battles of the present day are beginning to be fought; and it is here that the doctrines of the New Church can afford the most efficient aid.

Before the difficulties were broached which now darken the understanding of Scripture, — before even there was any such science as geology, — every objection had been answered by the doctrine of the internal or spiritual sense as unfolded in the writings of Swedenborg. According to this doctrine, there is an infinitude of meaning in the Word of God. Nothing in it has been written in vain; nothing is trifling or valueless; nothing is merely local or temporal in its character. Whatever may be the external appearance in any portion of it, — within, it is everywhere filled with life and holiness. The literal meaning of the Bible is not all it contains; it is but its least and lowest part. As words are to thoughts, as the body of man is to his soul, so is the letter of the Scriptures to the higher meaning within it. *This* is its life and essence. This is

what makes it, to the perception even of the least impressible of human beings, the most powerful of earthly writings. The internal sense treats throughout of spiritual and heavenly things, of the affairs of everlasting life, of the kingdom of God which is within us.

Swedenborg not only shows that there is a spiritual sense in the Scriptures, but, by copious expositions, makes manifest what it is, and how it is unfolded. As was previously remarked, his largest work, the "Arcana Cœlestia," is a consecutive explanation of the internal meaning of Genesis and Exodus. He says in this work, that, as a general rule, the historical parts of the Word are in their literal sense a record of real events, but that the first ten and a half chapters of Genesis, including nearly all that precedes the birth of Abraham, do not constitute a true historic narrative, and can be rationally understood and received in their spiritual sense alone. The whole world seems now rapidly coming to the same conclusion.

The Scriptures and their interpretation will be treated of in the next lecture, so that we need not go further into details at the present time. My sole object in the preceding remarks has been to point out the position which the Scriptures hold in New Church theology, and to emphasize the fact that every important principle in what is known as the Swedenborgian belief

is deduced from the Word of God. The New Church as an outward organization may be defined as a body which believes in a definite spiritual sense within the letter of the Bible, and in a system of doctrine which that higher sense discloses, — Emanuel Swedenborg being its exponent and interpreter.

SECOND LECTURE.

THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.

THE Scriptures — called also the Holy Bible and the Word of God — are a collection of writings handed down from former times, and purporting to proceed from the Lord himself and to be his own direct revelation to men. They are known to be divided into two general parts, which are respectively designated as the Old Testament and the New Testament. The latter of these dates from a period shortly following the advent of the Lord Jesus Christ, and has accordingly been in existence some eighteen hundred years. The former was written at various times. Its latest portions precede the Christian era by several centuries, and its earliest are among the most ancient of known writings.

This remarkable book has always been associated with the worship of the one true God. During the ages while Egypt and Phœnicia, Greece and Rome, and other famous nations of antiquity, were paying homage to a multitude of so-called deities, a small, obscure people in the little district of Palestine was preserving the precious traditions, transmitted from a still older period,

that there is one Supreme Being, who is the Creator and Governor of the universe. "Hear, O Israel," this people was taught to say, "Jehovah, our God, is one Jehovah." Their religious ideas and customs were not of their own invention, but came to them from time to time in the writings now called the Old Testament. In conforming to the law and the prophets, they believed that they simply obeyed the voice of God himself.

After the Lord came into the world, and the New Testament was given to men, the worship of the God of Israel was still continued among Christians; and the Scriptures were still regarded as the basis and authority for it. The Gospel attaches itself so closely to the law and the prophets that no separation between them is possible. Throughout the four evangelists we are told that such or such a thing was done in order that a certain prophecy might be fulfilled. To the Jews who opposed and persecuted Him, the Lord said, "There is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" The converse of this proposition must also be true: that those who accept the Lord's teachings will of necessity accept those of Moses likewise; for we read in the Sermon on the Mount, "Think not that I am

come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Again, the Lord says, "Search the Scriptures." "The Scripture cannot be broken." "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass than one tittle of the law to fail." In short, no one can yield an unconditional acceptance to the narrative contained in the four Gospels without including likewise the older revelation, on which it professedly and manifestly rests. The Scriptures are one grand whole, with all its parts woven together, as it were, like a seamless garment. To the Scriptures Christianity owes its origin and continuance, and with them it must stand or fall.

Let us consider for a moment the claim which the Bible makes for itself, not omitting to notice how much the claim implies. "Thus saith Jehovah;" "The word of Jehovah came unto me;" "These are the true sayings of God:" such are the expressions which fill its pages. Not the slightest reservation is made as regards the source and authority of its utterances. In the most direct and unequivocal manner it declares itself the medium of divine instruction to men. Waiving all inquiries as to the authenticity of particular books, chapters, or verses, we are at once confronted with the grand general question whether

the Scriptures are what they proclaim themselves to be. If they are, they should be embraced with all the heart as the most precious of earthly treasures. If they are not, it is difficult to find language strong enough for their condemnation; for nothing could be more monstrous than the assumption which they make. What terms of severity can be too great to apply to authors who falsely affirm that their compositions are divine and infallible truths? From the dilemma thus presented there is no escape. There is no middle course between the full admission of the divine inspiration of Scripture, and the utter rejection of its claims. Either it is the veritable Word of God or it is a human compilation which has forced itself into notice for centuries under the awful pretext that it is divine.

Those who receive the doctrines of the New Church, as presented in Swedenborg's writings, cannot hesitate as to their choice. No alternative whatever is suggested in those writings. They proceed, from first to last, on the assumption that the Scriptures speak truly about themselves, and that the highest claim which could possibly be made for them is none too great. If there is any one point which these doctrines establish more clearly than any other, it is that the Scriptures are the expression of God's infinite wisdom, and the exhaustless fountain of it to human beings. The men to whom the Word

of God came did not write from themselves. They simply recorded the things which were given them to say. It was not even necessary that they should understand the meaning of what they wrote; nor could they understand it, except in a very slight degree. Not only are the Scriptures the Lord's Word, not only have they proceeded from Him, but they partake of his nature. As surely as the work of any human author exhibits the peculiar quality of his mind, so surely does the Lord's book show forth his divine quality. In its essence it makes one with Him. It is infinite and unfathomable, even as He is. The saying is literally true: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

Not that the Word always existed in the precise form in which we know it in the Scriptures. The Scriptures are revelations which have been given at different periods of time. But divine truth, as it is in its essence, has forever existed in the bosom of the infinite. Our Scriptures are the means by which it has presented and accommodated itself to the states of natural and finite creatures. But, in so doing, it has not become separated from its source. The form contains the essence, as the body contains the soul. The spirit of truth abides interiorly in its letter. The life and power of divinity itself are in the Scriptures, though outwardly they are adapted to the

lowest human intelligence. Hence they have ever been full of peace and comfort to all classes of people, — to children and old men, — to the simple in their simplicity, and the wise in their wisdom. Those who have read them lovingly and receptively have been conscious of a peculiar influence which no mere verbal expressions were sufficient to account for. There is a something in the Psalms of David which could not be supplied by a thousand Homers. The lives of Moses and Joshua could not be replaced by the glory, infinitely multiplied, of Socrates and Alexander. In short, there is no comparison between the essential quality of the holy Word and that of all other writings.

Because the Scriptures proceed from the Lord God himself, they must needs contain an infinitude of meaning. Their literal sense is but the lowest and outermost form which divine truth puts on. Within that sense are higher and interior senses, which are adapted to more exalted states of intelligence and wisdom than those which usually prevail in this world. For the reason that the Scriptures are divine, they can nowhere have a merely temporal and transitory significance, but must reach beyond the present life into that life which is spiritual and eternal. Hence they are not merely for men, but for angels, according to what is written in the psalm: "Forever, O Jehovah, thy word is settled in

heaven." But the inhabitants of heaven perceive in them a higher meaning than their brethren do on earth. They are nearer to the sources of truth, and behold it more as it is in its naked purity. In other words, they receive it in its spiritual and celestial senses, while men in the world see nothing but its literal or natural sense.

This intrinsic and distinctive quality of Scripture is the only real proof of its divinity. No acuteness of textual criticism can make or unmake a sincere belief in the Word of God. There is no historical evidence outside of its own statements which goes to show that the Bible was written by divine inspiration. We do not know of witnesses that stood by when Isaiah penned his majestic prophecies, or Jeremiah his tearful lamentations, or John, in the Isle of Patmos, his visions of things to come. But if these writings possess an interior power which is all their own, if they seem to increase in beauty and significance, the longer and more attentively we study them, — if, especially, they can be shown to contain profound depths of wisdom which appear actually exhaustless, — what need of any further testimony? Indeed, the Bible must prove itself true to the minds of men by their observation and experience of its contents, if it is really proved true at all.

But how is it that an internal or spiritual sense can be inclosed within the sense of the letter?

Briefly, then, it is by correspondence, or, as we may say, by symbols. The Scriptures are symbolically written. Everything in them which is apparent to the natural apprehension represents something higher than itself. All the literal narratives typify spiritual experiences. All the literal precepts hold in their bosoms heavenly and eternal principles. Nor is the connection between that which represents and that which is represented at all an arbitrary one, confined exclusively to the Scriptures; it is a relationship universally existing between natural and spiritual things.

Nature is a manifestation of something more than dead matter: it is filled and permeated with spiritual life. Every species of animals, plants, or minerals is different from every other because the life within it is different. There is no outward object on which our eyes can rest which is not the concrete expression of some indwelling spiritual essence. Man is the universe in miniature. All other created things have relation to, and centre in, him. They exist for his mind, as well as for his body. They are capable of ministering to his sentiments and emotions, as well as to his physical necessities. The world around him is wondrously responsive to the world within him. The reason is, because all the varied objects of nature are but the embodied forms and visible images of his own thoughts and feelings.

There is nothing in the whole material creation which has not a distinctive spiritual meaning.

All men perceive, in some small measure, the interior significance of things. No demonstration is required to convince any one that the rose and lily are fair, or that the sweet singing birds, the skipping lambs, the running brooks, the fruitful fields, are things of beauty, and a joy forever. Nor need we be told, on the other hand, that beasts and birds of prey, or noisome and poisonous plants, or stagnant, fetid pools, are loathsome and repulsive. Almost intuitively we divide natural objects into two classes, — one of which seems to us good, and the other evil. But wherein does the difference consist? The wolf is fashioned as wonderfully as the lamb. The anatomy of the vile crawling serpent is as striking and beautiful as that of the young robin which he devours. In fact, in this merely outward sense, there is no just distinction between them. Nor can any of the brute animals be regarded as morally responsible, or as having the least idea of good and evil, as such. Each one simply acts out what is in itself, — gives expression to its own inborn nature, from which it cannot vary. They are not, therefore, either good or evil in themselves, but only the embodied forms of something good or evil. They impress us favorably or unfavorably by virtue of what they represent, — by virtue of the spiritual

thing which they faithfully picture to the natural senses.

This relation between what is spiritual and what is natural is called correspondence; and the Scriptures were written by means of correspondence. The Lord's way of providing forms of truth is the same as his way of creating forms of life. In both cases the natural clothes the spiritual as with a garment. In their obvious literal sense, the Scriptures relate largely to transient, earthly events. But when the spiritual sense is evolved from the literal by an interpretation of its symbols, all earthly things that are mentioned become transformed into corresponding spiritual things. In this manner a continuous meaning is obtained, which is entirely distinct from the only meaning which was at first apparent. The history of the Jews, for instance, when thus translated, is seen to be an account of the spiritual growth and experiences, the possible temptations, trials, and backslidings of the true church, or of any man of that church, in all ages. Their sacrifices, burnt-offerings, and other ceremonial observances, in themselves quite meaningless to the men of modern times, represent with almost infinite detail the essentials of a true interior and heartfelt worship. Man need not at this day offer sacrifices of bullocks and goats; but if he would truly worship his heavenly Father, he must perform spiritual acts which

the sacrifices represent. Thus nothing is obsolete, nothing is lost, in the sacred volume; but all of it is of present and everlasting import, and its claim to be considered the adequate revelation of an infinite God is fully vindicated.

It is shown in Swedenborg's writings that in the most ancient times correspondences were well understood, and the knowledge of them was considered the most precious of mental possessions. By means of them men were enabled to lift their thoughts by regular and intelligible steps "from nature up to nature's God"; and nothing afforded them so great delight as to see the spiritual and divine significance of all created things. But, in the course of time, as their hearts turned to evil and became more and more engrossed in selfish and worldly objects of desire, this chief of all subjects of human knowledge was gradually obscured in the mind, till at last it dropped almost wholly out of sight. Still, some traces of it remained, and are to be found even at this day. The sculpture-writing and picture-writing of the Egyptians, known by the name of hieroglyphics, are to be referred to this source. In like manner the mythology of the ancients, which plainly means much more than it outwardly expresses, has its foundation and origin in correspondences. And many common forms and customs which cannot be explained on merely natural grounds are relics of the days when the

connection between natural and spiritual things was better understood than it has since been. There is unquestionably more or less of correspondence in such ceremonies as kneeling in prayer, the imposition of hands in token of blessing, the wearing of distinctive robes of office, the laying of corner-stones, bowing or uncovering the head as a sign of respect, giving the wedding-ring, grasping or shaking the hand to indicate friendship, and in many others which might be mentioned. If these observances have not a spiritual significance, they are mere arbitrary forms for which any others might be substituted with just as good effect. But who really believes that such is the case? Who can doubt that there is intrinsic propriety in the aforesaid customs, for the reason that they do truly embody or express in outward form the very act or state of mind which is usually associated with them?

It is an interesting fact that a belief in the internal sense of Scripture has faintly betrayed itself from time to time in the past history of the church. The idea was not wholly unfamiliar, even to the Jewish mind. In Calmet's Bible Dictionary I find this general statement: "The ancient Jews, as the Therapeutæ, the author of the Book of Wisdom, Josephus and Philo (and, in imitation of them, many of the fathers), turned even the historical parts of Scripture into allegories, although the literal sense in such passages is most

clear." Concerning one of the greatest men of the early Christian church, Neander says: "To the mind of Origen the highest problem of the interpretation of Scripture is to translate the gospel of sense into the gospel of spirit." "Thus he saw in every part of Scripture a condescension of the infinitely exalted, heavenly spirit to the human form which is so incompetent to grasp it, — a condescension of the Divine teacher of humanity to the wants and weakness of man." He also quotes from Origen these remarkable words: "We ought not to be surprised if in every text of Scripture what is superhuman in the thought does not become immediately obvious to the unlearned." "Neither can we doubt the divinity which pervades the whole body of the sacred Scriptures, because our weakness is unable to trace, in every one of its declarations, that hidden glory of the doctrine which is veiled beneath an unpretending simplicity of expression 'for we have the treasure in earthen vessels.'"

No regular and systematic method of interpretation grew out of these various efforts. They are now simply alluded to as showing the strong feeling which existed in those early times with regard to the divinity of Scripture, and the deep sense of need which no literal exegesis was able to satisfy. Precisely the same necessity is felt at the present day. Indeed, there is always a

tendency on the part of devout readers of the Word to spiritualize its expressions as far as they can, in order to make them applicable to their own lives. They do not love to think that any portion of Holy Writ was intended only for past ages, and has outlived its usefulness. They wish to find a place in their hearts for every verse. Accordingly, they often invest a passage with a kind of inner meaning almost without knowing it, and certainly without acknowledging any fixed principle of spiritual interpretation. The wilderness journey of the Israelites, for example, is frequently taken as a type of the process by which man is gradually prepared for heaven.

All professed Christians believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, at the time of his coming into the world, fulfilled the various predictions which had been made concerning the Messiah. But not one would say that He fulfilled them in all respects literally. Some of those prophecies declared that He was to build up Zion, to reëstablish the kingdom of David at Jerusalem, and to gather together the outcasts of Israel. But he brought none of these events naturally to pass. It must, therefore, be a spiritual Zion, Jerusalem, and Israel which are referred to. The Jew says that the prophecies are still to be accomplished according to the letter. The Christian declares that they have been already spiritually accomplished. The New Churchman maintains that

not only these, but all the prophecies, and not only the prophecies but the precepts and histories, whether their literal sense is fully verified or not, possess a spiritual meaning. He makes a universal application of a principle which his predecessors have tried, in a few exceptional cases, to apply before him.

To show how the key of correspondence can be used to unlock the treasure-house of divine revelation would require far more time than can be spared for a single lecture. The most that can be done at the present moment is to bring forward a few simple illustrations.

Allusion was made a few minutes ago to the sacrificial worship of the Israelites; and it was stated that, though rude and barbarous in itself, it represents genuine internal worship of the heart. But how can this be? The sacrifices consisted in burning the flesh of certain species of animals; and animals correspond to the various affections and thoughts of man. According to the doctrine previously explained, there is no creature that walks the earth, or flies above it, which is not the embodied form of something in the human heart or mind. This something may be either good or evil, gentle or fierce, guileless or subtle; but whatever it is, it finds expression in the character and habits of the animal which is representative of it. Thus the lamb is a form of innocence; the hog, of filthy lusts; the ox, of

natural good affections; the serpent, of things earthy and sensual. The animals offered in sacrifices represents the affections and thoughts which rightly enter into the worship of the Lord. None but clean beasts were used for the purpose. Any noisome reptile, or bird of prey, or other unclean animal, would have been an utter abomination. Even so it should be our constant endeavor to put away from the Lord's sight everything hurtful and impure; and, as the flesh of sheep and cattle and turtle-doves smoked upon the altars of Israel, so should the best feelings of our hearts ascend in adoration and prayer to our Heavenly Father.

When we read in Isaiah, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters;" or in John, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink," it is easy to understand and believe that water corresponds to truth. The analogy is clear and striking. Truth performs for the mind the same office which water performs for the body. There is a spiritual thirst which can be satisfied only by truth, just as there is a natural thirst which can be satisfied only by water. By applying truth to his life, man's evils are removed, as by the outward application of water all physical impurities are washed away. The "well of water springing up into everlasting life" is the divine Word. The same is the "pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of

the throne of God and of the Lamb." The promised land of the Israelites is described as "a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills;" by which is meant that in the heavenly state denoted by Canaan there is an abundance of refreshing truth. The use of water in baptism plainly represents the removal of evil by means of divine truth; which work being effected, the mind is prepared to received the purest and best influences from the Lord himself, — in other words, to be baptized with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

The sun, more perfectly than any other visible object, shadows forth the glory of the Lord. His heat signifies the Lord's love, and his light the Lord's wisdom. "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple." "That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." "There is nothing hid from the heat thereof." Times and places signify, in the spiritual sense, states of mind. The daytime is a state of clear thought and warm affection, and the night is a state of obscurity and doubt. The six days of creation represent as many successive states or stages of regeneration, ending with the Sabbath, or the state of eternal rest. Each of these days consisted of an evening and a morning, the evening being always mentioned first; by which is meant that the corresponding states of regenerating life

grow more bright and perfect as they advance. Egypt, as we know, stands for the state of the merely natural man; Canaan, for that of the spiritual and heavenly man. The Garden of Eden, likewise, represents a state of superior wisdom and intelligence.

Thus we might proceed without limit. But perhaps enough has been said to illustrate, in some small measure, the principle of interpretation which is afforded by the doctrine of the spiritual sense. That principle is equally applicable to all parts of the inspired Word. Any writings to which it is not applicable are not inspired. If its truth is admitted, nothing surely can exceed it in importance; for no greater change could possibly be made in our understanding of the Scriptures than that which should transform them wholly into a connected account of the Lord and his kingdom, of heavenly life and the way to attain it, of our own daily experiences and needs.

"The pure river of water of life, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb," flows down through the heavens to earth. By the heavens we are not to understand a distant, inaccessible country far off in space, but the better part of that inner world of spirit, which is round about our own souls, and where the angels live of whom it is written that the Lord gives them charge over us. These angels, as was previously said, receive

the Word in its spiritual and celestial senses, while men read it in the sense of the letter. Hence it is a wonderful bond of union between angels and men. It serves to consociate them with each other and to conjoin them all with the Lord. The stream of truth comes to us laden with divine and heavenly blessings, as it gently flows from the infinite fount of wisdom, through the streets of the golden city and the green pastures of paradise.

THIRD LECTURE.

THE DIVINE NATURE AND PROVIDENCE.

How does it teach us to think of God? is the first question to be asked in relation to any religious system. The ideas which we entertain of the Supreme Being will go far to determine the position which we occupy with respect to Him. If we know and understand Him rightly, we have taken one long step toward loving Him, and conforming our lives to his divine order.

The true starting-point in considering the nature of God is to be found in the declaration, often repeated and everywhere implied, throughout the Scriptures: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord." This is the fitting introduction to the first and great commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." If we truly and intelligently love the Lord, we must, first of all, direct our attention to Him as the one God. He never is nor can be divided. He must be thought of as absolutely and unequivocally one. Whatever appearance to the contrary may be presented in any of the terms to be found in the Scriptures, it can be only an appearance.

By whatever variety of names He may be designated in his Word, they are all consistent with the idea of his perfect unity. Any trinity which may be shown to exist in Him must agree with the fundamental doctrine that He is one in essence and in person. When, for example, the Scriptures speak of the Lord Jesus Christ, they do not indicate a being distinct from the Heavenly Father, but a certain phase and manifestation of the divine nature and life. The same is true of the Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost. By the mouth of Isaiah we are told: "There is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me." And we cannot be too mindful of the weighty words.

Assuming, then, the grand truth of his oneness, we come next to the fact that He is the only uncreated, self-subsisting being, who is the centre and source of life from eternity to eternity. And here, again, let us take our starting-point from the Scriptures. When God appeared to Moses in the burning bush and commanded him to lead forth the children of Israel out of Egypt, He said in response to a question as to the name by which He should be known: "I am that I am," or, more literally, "I am who am," — *i. e.*, "He who is." "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel: I Am hath sent me unto you." "Jehovah, God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath

sent me unto you; this is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, or the Word of the Old Testament, Jehovah is the name by which he is most commonly called. In our English version of the Bible, instead of "Jehovah," "the Lord" is substituted in capital letters. It is not necessary now to explain the reasons for that substitution. Enough is said if it is understood that "Jehovah" was the word which was used. This is the memorial name, and it means the "I AM." Derived from the Hebrew word "*hayah*," to be, it must forever signify, to all who are acquainted with its origin, the infinite and uncreated One, who was, is, and will be, for evermore.

And what does this name imply? In the first place, He who alone is must be the source of life to all other beings. He has not made the universe from nothing, for that would be impossible; but He has created it from Himself. In other words, finite things are forms of life derived from his life; and his is the omnipresent power which sustains them all.

This important principle leads us, by inference, directly to another. The omnipresent God must be with and in his creation, not separated from it. The work of creation is ever going on. Every one who reflects upon the matter must see that the Power which sustains him from hour

to hour and from minute to minute is no less marked and conspicuous, and no more easily accounted for, than that which originally called him into being. In a word, preservation is continual creation.

The flow of life is from within outward. It is from the soul to the body, from the affection to the deed, from the thought to the word, from what is spiritual to what is natural, and never in the opposite direction. And He who is the cause is likewise the source and centre of life. By successive steps or degrees it descends to the material bodies of men and to the material world, which is, so to speak, the circumference of creation. But He is still, as He was at first, the head and fountain of it all. Though He has made his infinity finite, though He has from Himself formed beings other than Himself, beings so distinct that they may even pervert his pure influences and turn them into their opposites, yet inmostly and really none of the works of his hand are separated from Him. The stream, however tainted by the grosser substances with which it comes in contact amid the plains and valleys of the earth, is not cut off from the divine spring whence it flows. In a word, God is the life of the life of all things. He did not, from without, mould them into being, like a human artificer, and then go off and leave them; but his power from within originally filled and animated them, and it equally fills and animates them now.

Herein is the great ground of distinction between God and man. Herein is the difference between the infinite and the finite. God has life and *is* life in Himself; man but receives life from Him. Could contrast be clearer or stronger? What more vivid picture of Infinity could be presented to the mind than that of a being who from his own fulness of life sends forth life, unceasingly and illimitably, through all this vast universe, with its heavens, and its heavens of heavens, its lands and its waters, time without end? And such is God. On the other hand, there can be no clearer illustration of finite helplessness than is afforded by the fact of being but a receptacle of life, from hour to hour, and from minute to minute, dependent for existence itself on a higher power. Yet such is man, with all his boasted intellect and strength. Again, He who in Himself is Life, and the only source of life, must from eternity to eternity have his existence. There can be nothing which in any sense either was, or is, prior to Him. The very suggestion of such a thought seems almost like profanation. In a word, the fact that God is the *Esse* of all things, necessarily implies that He is infinite and eternal. To Him times and spaces are nothing. These come into existence only in connection with finite beings; for the latter must needs be surrounded by conditions which are adapted to their finiteness.

Let us now turn to the next question which naturally presents itself; and that is, what do we know about the nature of the divine life, as it is in itself, pure and unperverted? In its essence it is surely something more than mere physical existence. Even human life is higher and better than this. There is the life of the body, but there is also the life of the soul within the body. There is the life of affection and thought above and within the life of animal desire and sensation. One of the most important statements of Scripture is that man is made in the image, after the likeness, of God; and it is evident that the more fully he grows into the true order of his being, and attains to the highest capabilities of his nature, so much the more perfect an image and likeness he becomes. From this doctrine it follows that a correct understanding of human nature will contribute greatly to a knowledge of the divine nature. A true idea of the image must lead to a right conception of its prototype. The soul or spirit of man is the man himself. The body is only the fleshly covering which for a while he wears. It is to the soul, — to the character and capacities of a well ordered human mind, — that we must chiefly look for the image of the Lord.

And what do we find when we look there? We find an organic form of life, invisible to the bodily sight, all of whose operations may be

classed under the two general heads of loving and thinking, or willing and understanding. These internal operations, seeking outward expression, make themselves known in the body as speech and action. Every voluntary act of man is immediately caused by anterior affection and thought. First, he wills a thing; secondly, by means of thought, that which he wills receives a distinct form in his mind, and, finally, by means of his bodily organs, he carries it into effect. So likewise, when we consider how unerringly the various thoughts and emotions may betray themselves in the face and gestures — how sorrow and sympathy bring the tear unbidden to the eye — how shame and modesty paint the unconscious blush on the cheek — how sudden fear causes the heart to palpitate, or lays the body prostrate in a swoon — it is easy to perceive that substantially the same principle applies to what we call involuntary actions, also.

Now, in these and all other conceivable operations of the human soul, spirit or mind, the primary motive principle is love. In other words, love is the very life of man. There is no thought which we think, no deed which we do, that is not prompted by love of one kind or another. It may be mere sensual inclination or appetite; it may be the lust of gain or dominion, or some other form of self-love; or, again, it may be an unselfish love of the neighbor, and a desire to

do him good and to make him happy; but love of some sort it is, and must be. The soul is the life of the body, and love is the life of the soul.

Rising now to the contemplation of Him in whose image man is made, we can reach but one conclusion. Love is the inmost essential principle of the divine life. As writes the apostle John, "God is love." Love ineffable and perfect. Love infinite and eternal for all things that exist. Love that is unwearied in its effort to bestow on objects outside of itself what it may of its own blessedness. Love that never ceases to create, to preserve, to protect. Let any one ask himself why it is that our Heavenly Father has taken the pains to create the human race, and the mighty universe, with all it contains, for their service and benefit; and he can find but one satisfactory answer, which follows as a direct corollary from the grand fundamental truth that God in his essence is love. It is this: We live because the Lord loves us. Not for his own glory, but for our happiness, has He called us into being. It is the very nature of pure and disinterested love to long for that on which it may bestow itself, for which it may do kindnesses, and by which it may be reciprocated. Such is the case even with finite creatures. What, then, must it be with the infinite Creator! To say that merely for the sake of exalt-

ing Himself and building up a great kingdom for the display of his omnipotence, He performed, and is performing, the work of creation, is to ascribe to Him motives which would be unworthy springs of action even for men. But to say that this work was the necessary effect of his divine love of doing good and conferring happiness, of his unutterable longing to impart from his own infinitude of joy, is to express what is consistent with our highest possible conceptions of the holy and perfect One.

Love, however, does not and cannot operate alone. It must be united with wisdom in order to accomplish any of its purposes. In this needful alliance love furnishes the impulse, and wisdom the guidance. Love furnishes the motive or end, and wisdom the means of carrying it into effect. As we have seen, man is a thinking, as well as a loving, being. Or, as we might say in other words, he has an understanding as well as a will. His understanding is the receptacle and organ of thought, as his will is the receptacle and organ of affection.

The human will and understanding are finite, imperfect, and prone to evil. But when we pass from man to his infinite archetype we see plainly that God's will and understanding must be perfect. No sinful affections or false thoughts can exist in the divine mind. Hence, whatever the Lord wills must be love itself, and whatever He

thinks must be wisdom itself. Love and wisdom, therefore, are his interior and essential life. Moreover, whatever proceeds from the divine love is *good;* and whatever proceeds from the divine wisdom is *true.* Or, to speak more plainly, his love going forth into act makes itself known as infinite goodness; his wisdom manifests itself as infinite truth. Consequently He is in like manner goodness itself and truth itself, and the source of them to men. All the love and wisdom, or goodness and truth, which appear in any of his creatures have been communicated by Him, who is their exhaustless fountain. When a man comes into the full order of his creation his will receives, in some finite measure, the divine love, and his understanding, the divine wisdom. He is, in the truest sense, formed into the Lord's image by being filled with the Lord's life.

We cannot too clearly apprehend this great cardinal principle, that just as surely as man interiorly consists of will and understanding, the Lord is love and wisdom. These are his essence, that which makes him to be what he is. They are not to be confounded with his attributes. They are Himself. All other things which may be predicated of him are referable to these. His attributes are the attributes of infinite love and wisdom, or, what is the same, of infinite goodness and truth. Since these constitute his essential nature, corresponding, as we have seen,

to will and understanding in man, He can do nothing which is inconsistent with them. His omnipotence is the power of his love and wisdom. Hence He is absolutely incapable of evil; nothing can go forth from Him which is not born of goodness itself. There is no law of right and wrong superior to Him, to which He is accountable. His goodness is not, like man's, the result of a choice between good and evil. But whatever He does is good, from the very fact of his doing it. Here is a new ground of distinction between infinity and finiteness, one which has not often been contemplated by man, but which is full of instruction with regard to the purposes and methods of our heavenly Father.

If evil cannot be predicated of the Lord, then He cannot produce pain or suffering, nor can He be angry or vindictive. Were it possible that He should be so, then it would be possible for Him not only to contradict his own nature, but to fall below even our imperfect standard of human virtue. And yet if we rely on some parts of the letter of the Scriptures, they may seem to teach that He is influenced by these unworthy feelings. They say that He is a jealous God, that He executes vengeance, and that He is angry with the wicked every day. But again they say that He is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works; that He is slow to anger and plenteous in mercy; and that He is kind to

the unthankful and the evil. In the light of the internal or spiritual sense, which was treated of in the last lecture, we see that the latter class of statements is strictly true, and that anything contrary to them is written according to the merely natural appearance. That is to say: Those who in their hearts and lives are hostile to the Lord will feel that He is hostile to them. Hating Him and his laws they naturally believe that He is full of hatred. And the divine truth of Scripture in its descent to human beings comes down even to the level of such men as these and accommodates itself to their low and external states of mind, seeking to restrain and govern them by fear when all higher motives and incentives would be useless. Do we not read in the Psalms, "With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt show thyself upright; with the pure thou wilt show thyself pure, and with the froward thou wilt show thyself froward?"

These views of the divine essence and attributes, long lost sight of, were not wholly unknown to men of the early Christian Church. Origen, from whom I made a brief quotation in the last lecture, speaks as follows respecting omnipotence: "God can do anything which does not contradict his essence as God, his goodness and his wisdom; (but he can do) nothing by which He would contradict Himself as God, as

the infinitely good and wise." So also with regard to divine anger he says: "It is a condescension of language, designed to convert and improve" men. "God is described to us as angry, in order to our conversion and improvement, when in truth He is not angry." In the course of his remarks on this subject he compares the human race to children, who need to be addressed in terms adapted to their feebler powers of understanding.

The grand foundation truth, that the Lord God is in his essence love and wisdom, goes far to help us understand his Providence, or the nature of his dealings with men. He loves us infinitely. He can never cease to regard our highest possible good and happiness; and if He is infinitely wise there can be no mistakes or accidents in the dispensations of his Providence. Yet our happiness depends on certain conditions which may or may not be fulfilled. Man is not a lifeless machine, but a free and rational being. The Lord, in creating him to be the object of his divine love, did not intend that he should be a merely passive recipient of blessings. Indeed, it is in the nature of love to desire, not simply to give itself to others, but to be returned or reciprocated by them. It is for men not only to be loved by the Lord, but to love Him on their part. This is their prerogative above all other creatures. It necessitates a state of freedom, for without entire freedom of

thought and action there could be nothing reciprocal in any relations which they sustain.

The effect of mutual love is mutual nearness and conjunction. Those who truly love each other seek ever to be of one heart and one spirit. And those who love the Lord are in harmony with Him. Their love begins with keeping his commandments. It is made sure by their removing from themselves those things which they can see, on faithful self-examination, to be at variance with Him. They do not love Him in the fullest sense until his will is wholly accepted as their own. When this is done, they are conjoined with Him in heart and soul; and there is no happiness to be compared with that which they experience.

But it is evident that such a consummation, if ever reached in this world, cannot be long enjoyed here. Our earthly life is quite too short for that. It must be chiefly in the world to come that divine love gains, if we may so speak, its prize. It must be men that have become angels and are ever to continue so, who mainly show forth the divine purposes accomplished. Does it not then follow that the divine Providence of the Lord must have, as its great end and object, a heaven of angels from the human race?

This conclusion would seem to be inevitable. If God intended that men should be happy, — if

He created them in order that they might be happy; if He designed that they should love Him with their finite love, even as He loves them with his infinite love; if He wished and ever wishes to unite them closely with Himself in the bonds of unutterable joy and peace; if such, in brief, was the divine plan, then surely it cannot be carried out in a few short years of earthly existence. You believe that God is love and from love has created you, and you cannot help believing that you and all men are immortal.

Inasmuch as the divine Providence has this eternal end in view with respect to every man, it must be that no means are ever left unemployed whereby it may be accomplished. The perfect government of infinite love and wisdom is to be found in the minutest circumstances no less than in the grand events of life. There is no object or incident so trivial as to escape it. Year by year, and minute by minute, ever watching for opportunities to bend us, without breaking us, to his purpose, God sits above, around, within us. Not a single event befalls, or can befall us, coming from sources beyond our agency and control, but we may see his finger in it, pointing straight to heaven. It may be poverty, it may be sickness, it may be death; and, again, it may be some petty every-day occurrence; but, whatever it be, it is for the time intended as the best and surest guidance of our souls. If we do but accept

it, some good result must follow. The incessant care and watchfulness of Providence are truly wonderful beyond all power of expression; but the thought that they are exercised for no other reason than that the Lord loves us, and wishes to make us happy and to bring us into heaven, is indeed utterly overwhelming.

FOURTH LECTURE.

THE INCARNATION AND REDEMPTION.

THE grand central truth that God is in his essence love and wisdom, furnishes the key for unlocking the secrets of all the divine operations. We have seen that the divine Providence is the government of the divine love and wisdom of the Lord. We have also seen that man, made in the image, after the likeness of God, placed at the head of all created beings, is endowed with the capacity of knowing and loving his heavenly Father, of receiving the divine love and wisdom and reciprocating them, and thus of coming into a conscious, eternal conjunction with Him whose essence they are. As it is a necessary condition of such reception and reciprocation, that man should act in freedom according to reason, he is therefore made capable of doing so. He is in this respect as well as in others, an image and likeness of God. The divine effort, never for a moment intermitted, is to lead him by every means consistent with his entire freedom, to depart from evil and do good, and so to become an angel.

The means employed by the Lord in the gov-

ernment of men are both general and particular in their character; general, in so far as they relate to the human race as a whole, and particular, in so far as they relate to smaller communities and individuals. The latter class of providential agencies comprises all the events beyond the control of human beings, which from day to day are permitted to befall them; for, as was previously stated, there may be traced, in every one of such events, the guiding hand of our heavenly Father. In his perfect sight there is no such thing as accident. But all things that come upon us, whether they seem to savor of good or of evil fortune, are designed to aid our free and rational endeavors to ascend to a purer and better state of life.

As regards the *general* means which Providence makes use of, the first and foremost of them all, in the opinion of every Christian man and woman, must be the coming of the Lord. This event, in whatever light it is viewed by those who claim to be the followers of Christ, must appear to them as beyond comparison the great event of history. It is the burden of all previous prophecy; and after-time looks back to it as the grandest of earthly epochs. To the consideration of this great subject let us now address ourselves.

If the Scriptures had ended with the Old Testament, it would have been hardly possible

for human ingenuity to raise any question as to the divine unity. So plainly is the one God, Jehovah, set before the mind's eye that there is little, if any, opportunity to wander from Him. It is only with the birth which is chronicled at the beginning of the New Testament that serious trouble arises. One makes his appearance who is said to have been begotten of God and born of the virgin Mary. He is called alike the Son of God and the Son of Man. He speaks of God as his Father, and addresses Him repeatedly in prayer. He cries on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and in various other ways presents the appearance of a distinct being or person.

Yet no one who reads and receives the Scripture record can gather from it that He is a man like other men. Such a thought is forbidden both by what He says of Himself and by what is said about Him. "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." "Before Abraham was, I am." "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth." "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." No mere human being can truthfully talk in this manner. The very suggestion of such a thought almost savors of profanation. And when we read further, that he was the Word made flesh; that his life was the fulfilment of all the law and

the prophets, and that He baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire, to say nothing of countless other statements and inferences with which the gospels teem, the idea that He belongs to the class of common, finite men becomes less and less tenable and more and more revolting.

No appearances should be allowed to frighten us from the grand central truth of all religious faith; that the Lord our God is one Lord. Not for an instant should any theory respecting the Son of God be entertained which in the least detracts from the absolute oneness of the divine essence and personality. Holding up this doctrine as a candle, and reading the gospel by its light, we see clearly that the birth of Jesus Christ was simply *God's own way of bringing Himself into the world.* That "holy thing," which was begotten of Jehovah, and born of Mary, and appropriately called the Son of God, was not a being distinct from the Father, but the outward natural embodiment of the Father, — a human form and nature assumed by the Father for the purpose of bringing Himself down to men in the time of their great need.

God, as we know, is life itself. He not only created men in the beginning, but forever and continually creates them by the renewal of their life. His is the inmost life, which is the fountain of all other life; and no living thing could survive a single instant, if this life should cease

to flow. By appointed mediums and through various channels, it comes to finite creatures. It is transmitted from one generation to another by means of natural parents. The law of birth is, that from the father proceeds the inner vital principle, which receives an outward form or body from the mother. All men have human fathers. A finite medium, a secondary cause of life, comes between them and the infinite source. But it was not so with the Lord Jesus Christ. His life came directly from the divine Father, with no human agency intervening, and found a receptacle in the natural body, which, with its attendant faculties, was born of Mary. His humanity differed from other humanity in this respect: That all that part of it which was derived from the Father, — that is to say, the interior life and essence — was divine. But the external part, which came from the mother, was finite, imperfect, and prone to evil. Inasmuch as no human father intervened between him and the divine and infinite source of being, therefore his connection with that source was always unbroken and perfect. His internal and essential life was that of divinity itself flowing down immediately into the humanity. There was no distinction of persons in the common acceptation of the term, but only, to a certain extent, the outward appearance of such a distinction. This appearance is wholly unavoidable ; for every one can see that

God could not possibly clothe Himself in finite human form without making it seem that another being, separate from Himself, had been created or manifested. But even the appearance grew less and less during the brief period of his life on earth, until at last it wholly passed away.

The doctrine that Jesus Christ is God made manifest in the flesh is not a figment of man's imagination, but rests on the emphatic declarations of Scripture: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulders, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." "Behold the Lord Jehovih will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for Him." "Behold the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, Jehovah our Righteousness." "I am Jehovah thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour." "As for our Redeemer, Jehovah of Hosts is his name, the Holy One of Israel." "I, even I, am Jehovah, and besides me there is no saviour." "I am Jehovah: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another."

Such are some of the voices of prophecy in which the one God Jehovah is represented as the only Redeemer and Saviour of men, and the Messiah, who was to come, is identified with Him. And when He comes, we do not fail to hear the same things repeated. By common consent, his advent is the fulfilment of all prophecy. He is called "Immanuel, God with us." He says of Himself, "I and the Father are one." To one of his disciples, begging Him to show them the Father, He replies, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?" Again: "He that seeth me, seeth Him that sent me." Paul, also, in his epistles, confirms the teaching in many ways; as, for instance, when he says that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself," or that "in Him," *i. e.* the Lord Jesus Christ, "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

Thus the Lord our God is one Lord, and Jesus Christ is He. The term "Son of God" is used, according to the natural appearance, to designate the humanity which He assumed, but not as indicating a separate divine personality. This humanity was, to the fullest possible extent, the earthly tabernacle of infinite divinity. The latter was, as it were, *projected* into the former, to the utmost of its capacity to receive it. And all

that set any limits to this capacity was the finite and fallible nature of that external part of the humanity, — including the body and the lowest regions of the mind, — which was derived from the mother. From her were inherited all the tendencies to evil, which any man may inherit from the corresponding source. If it had not been so, the Lord could never have been tempted by the devil, for there can obviously be no temptation where there is no inclination toward an evil influence. But He uniformly resisted and overcame his temptations. By the divine strength which was in Him, he conquered all the powers of darkness when they assailed Him. This work, however, was accomplished by degrees, and not suddenly. As men cannot throw off all their evils in a moment, neither did He at one stroke remove every evil tendency, which came as his maternal heritage. But the effect of each victory over temptation was to weaken the power of resistance in the lower human nature, and to bring it more and more under the influence of the indwelling divinity, until at last all that was of imperfect, earthly origin was put away from it and the whole humanity became divine. Then was it, indeed, the adequate and fit abode of the infinite and eternal One. Neither the narrow sepulchre, nor even the earth itself, could contain the glorified form of Christ. But all of divinity was comprised in the divine human-

ity, like an infinite soul in an infinite body. Humanity made perfect became the means whereby divinity, which was always perfect, is brought down to the poor and feeble comprehension of men. He who in thought sees the Lord Jesus Christ sees the Father, for He is the outward embodiment and presentment of the Father. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."

It is not to be expected that we should be able to understand immediately all the particulars of the divine incarnation, or of the means by which it was accomplished. Our insight into any such subject must of necessity be very limited. It is but little that we know even about our own souls and their connection with our bodies, — the method in which they, so to speak, are incarnated. But all the knowledge that we have of our own spiritual nature will help us to understand the divine human nature of the Lord.

One important truth may be apprehended with considerable clearness. It is, that every man is, as it were, two men. That is to say, each one of us has in himself a distinctly twofold nature. There are natural faculties, appetites, and desires, which are closely associated with the body; and there are spiritual or heavenly faculties, affections, thoughts, and aspirations. The one class of faculties is external, the other internal. By

virtue of the one, man is allied to the beasts that perish; by virtue of the other he is made a companion and equal of the angels. These two planes or degrees of life imply a double consciousness. And, indeed, nothing is more common than for a man to be divided against himself, — to be agitated at one and the same time by diverse and conflicting emotions, — to be conscious of two distinct sets of desires struggling within him for supremacy. The higher nature has also the power of scrutinizing and judging the lower, and of bringing it into harmony with itself. This is always done when men are regenerated. The animal in them becomes wholly subject to the angel. The outward and earthly plane of their being is pervaded and animated by the deeper spiritual life.

Likewise in the Lord Jesus Christ we discern a twofold nature, which presents in some respects a far wider and sharper contrast. His natural humanity is seen in connection with absolute divinity itself, not with finite spiritual faculties. Outwardly man, He was inwardly God. Assuming an external human nature, He did not leave his place in the heavens, nor lose that inmost divine consciousness, whereby He presides over the universe. He had provided a form of life, — a human form, his own image and likeness, — with which He dwelt in immediate contact, and into which his divine spirit or influ-

ence could gradually descend, until he had wholly filled it with Himself, and made it his own perfect receptacle and embodiment. Until that consummation was reached, there must needs be separation, and even conflict, between the divine and human natures which coexisted in Him. But afterwards there was only unity and peace.

A knowledge of this dual nature, which was embodied and expressed in Jesus Christ, enables us to understand many apparent contradictions in his life, which would otherwise be inexplicable. We see how He could be truly called "the mighty God, the everlasting Father," and also "a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief;" how at one time He could undergo the torment of temptation, and at another could stand on the Mount of Transfiguration, his face shining like the sun, and his raiment white as the light. He presents to us alike the realities of divine glory and of human suffering. Those who looked on Him in this world beheld a human form like their own. Sometimes they saw that form bowing in prayer to God. They heard Him say: "My Father is greater than I," and rebuke the young man who saluted Him as "Good Master." The language varies according as the divine or the human nature is primarily treated of. Before his humanity was made divine, and while He had still a work to do in overcoming the evil tendencies which clung to it, Jesus was not good as God

is good; the Father was greater than the Son, even as the self-subsisting and life-giving divinity was greater than the not yet glorified humanity which it had begotten. The Lord prayed to the Father because in the external parts of his nature which were tempted He had the same need of divine help that all men have. Our own experience may aid us in perceiving what his must have been. At times we are borne down by the weight of our iniquity and the appalling sense of our wickedness. Our natural minds are darkened, and seem to be cut off from the spiritual sources of light. Then may the cry go forth almost unwittingly from our lips, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" But after a while, perhaps, a higher region of life and thought is opened within us, and we are able to look down as from a mountain-top upon our former troubles. We, at our best, are only spiritual and heavenly beings, whereas the Saviour was divine.

These various states are to be noticed in Him, until on the cross He gave up the ghost. When He rose from the dead, it was no longer the same with Him as before. His treatment of men and their treatment of Him are changed, as He approaches that perfect union with the Father which was completed at his final ascension. He has no word of reproof for Thomas when he exclaims, "My Lord and my God!" but simply

says, "Thomas, because thou hast seen, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." His disciples have an evident perception of his greatness and holiness, which they have not previously experienced. It is written that meeting Him upon a certain mountain, they worshipped Him. But some doubted; and then it was that Jesus spake unto them, saying, "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth."

But whatever may be thought or imagined respecting the philosophy of the incarnation, or the manner in which it was effected, the great fact itself remains for the enlightenment and comfort of all who are able to receive it. To one who can appreciate nothing more, it is of incalculable value to know, simply, that God, the creator of all things, is fully revealed and manifested in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. The thoughts take a definite form when they rest on such a God. He is not a distant, shapeless, mysterious shadow, but an infinite, divine man, living as near to us as one being can live to another, having been brought thus near by assuming a nature similar to our own, and by passing through similar experiences. He is one whom we can worship with a clear understanding and a devout heart.

And what shall we say of the work which He came on earth to do? One thing is certain in

the first place. It was prompted by infinite love and directed by infinite wisdom; for He himself is love and wisdom. He must have come because He loved men and they needed help. This was the sole end which He had in view, the single impulse which moved Him. There was no mixture of motives any more than there was a division of persons and offices. Hence there could be no divine anger to be appeased, even if He were capable of anger; nor any offended justice to be satisfied; nor any outraged majesty; but only love which could no longer hold itself back from sinning and suffering creatures.

The Scriptures speak in no ambiguous terms with regard to the purpose of his coming. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for He shall save his people from their sins." "The dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." His eternal plan was imperilled. The freedom which He had given to men, in order that they might reciprocate his love and join themselves to Him in the bonds of heavenly life and happiness, had been perverted and misused. Little by little they fell into evil, transmitting sinful tendencies to their descendants, and increasing the inheritance from one generation to another until they were almost

overwhelmed by their iniquities, and there was danger lest the human race should spiritually perish.

The order of Providence had always been that man should be free and able to shun evil, if he would. No parent, however wicked, could entail upon his children anything more than the *tendency* to evil. It is forever true, as is written in Ezekiel, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. . . . . The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." But at length there came a time in the history of mankind when evil so far preponderated over good, and hell over heaven, that even freedom itself was well-nigh lost. Right and wrong were so confounded with each other that men were hardly able to distinguished between them. Scarcely any one knew God or cared to know Him. Scarcely any one knew the way of life or cared to walk in it. Evil men outwardly and evil spirits inwardly had a controlling influence in human affairs. We read of persons who, even as to their bodies, were possessed with devils. The picture is a fearful one, and cannot be exaggerated. It answers to the awful language of prophecy: "Jehovah looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did

understand and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy ; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."

This was the time of the Lord's coming, and his purpose was, as we have seen, to save men from their sins. Mark the words, *from their sins*, not merely from the effect or punishment of their sins, though this must needs be a secondary result. And how could He save men from their sins so effectually, as by placing Himself where He could directly fight against those sins? The question is its own answer. Accordingly He took upon Himself the nature of those who so much needed his assistance, — assumed a humanity, which inherited on its maternal side all the evil tendencies which men inherited, and was subjected to temptations from the same infernal spirits who had almost compassed the downfall of mankind. Thus He set Himself face to face in battle with our spiritual enemies. And He overthrew them utterly. He drove them back to their own dark realm. He destroyed their predominant influence over human beings, and restored the freedom which they had so nearly subverted. He showed anew, to all who were willing to learn it, the difference between good and evil, and made sure to them the capacity, if they should choose to exercise it, of doing the one and shunning the other. He did not effect any immediate or miraculous change

in *them;* but He altered the circumstances by which they were surrounded, purifying the spiritual atmosphere in which they lived, causing new light to dawn upon their minds, revealing to them the precious truth of the gospel, establishing another and better order of things, and giving to his whole human family a fresh impulse towards the heavenly life.

Not by his death merely, but by his entire life, He brought salvation to the world. The passion of the cross was only the last of the series of temptations and conflicts whereby He overthrew the power of darkness and made his humanity divine. How grievous a temptation it was is clearly shown by his agony at Gethsemane, and by his despairing words on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Surely it was not simply the anticipation of natural death that caused so much suffering, and made his sweat like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. It was not simply the cruel indignity which He received at the hands of men which drew from Him that wail of despair. Lesser martyrs have borne these things without complaint. But as He prayed and suffered, the hells themselves had broken loose upon Him, and it must have seemed like the dark valley of spiritual death, which He as to his humanity was passing through. The nature of his temptations is briefly outlined in the account which is given

of them at the beginning of his ministry. Forty days and forty nights He is said to have been in the wilderness, tempted of the devil. Afterwards it is affirmed that the devil left Him "for a season." And that he returned again with fearful power is indicated by subsequent sayings and events. In short, his whole life, interiorly regarded, consisted of combats with evil, and victories over it.

One Heavenly Father, whose essence is love and wisdom, having the constant and immutable purpose of drawing us upwards into a state of eternal conjunction with Himself, so far as He can do it with our free coöperation, — this is our God. Taking on Himself our nature, with all its inherited tendencies to evil, and its consequent temptations, He confronted the spiritual foes of mankind, and overpowered them, thus becoming our Saviour and Redeemer Deliverance from the influence of evil spirits, and the implantation of what is good and pure and holy, not only at that particular time of the world's great need, but ever since in the heart of every man who has such faith in Him as to do his will and to keep his commandments, — this is his work of redemption.

FIFTH LECTURE.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND REGENERATION.

THE last two lectures have treated of the essential nature of God, and the general character of his dealings with men. They have also attempted to explain his coming in the flesh, and his glorification of the humanity which He assumed. If they have been at all successful in their purpose, they have served to show that the terms Father and Son, as applied to the Lord God, do not signify two distinct persons, but two essential parts or elements of one divine person. These two parts are to each other like soul and body in man. By the Father is to be understood the inmost divine nature or essence, such as it is in itself, wholly above and beyond the sight and comprehension of finite beings, and by the Son the outward human form and embodiment, by which the Father is brought forth to view. This human nature, assumed from Mary, was itself glorified or made divine by resisting and overcoming evil. As one man is made known to another by his bodily form and presence, so the infinite Father of all flesh is made known to his children through his divine humanity or the Lord Jesus Christ.

But while we have thus tried to understand what is meant by the Father and Son, scarcely any allusion has been made to the Holy Spirit. And surely no one who has a proper regard for the teachings of Scripture can doubt that our knowledge of the Supreme Being is incomplete until we have some idea as to what the Holy Spirit is. For not a little is said about the Holy Spirit in the gospel narratives. In the formula of baptism, as given by the Lord himself just before his ascension, it is most pointedly and significantly mentioned in connection with the Father and the Son. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Frequent reference is also made to the Comforter, called likewise the Spirit of Truth, or the Holy Spirit, which the Lord promised to send to his disciples after He himself should go away. It behooves us, therefore, if we would have a full and correct conception of the God of our worship, to inquire particularly into the nature and office of the Holy Spirit.

Again calling to remembrance the grand underlying principle of the absolute unity of the divine Being, we see that the Holy Spirit must be something which pertains to the one God, and adds to his fulness and perfection without in the

least suggesting the idea of a distinct personality. We would, therefore, ask ourselves, What third thing is necessary to complete the divine ideal which has been heretofore presented? What is there in God beside the inmost, life-giving divinity, and the divine humanity by which that divinity is revealed? What is it in addition to the soul and the body, which is needed to finish the conception of the infinite Father of creation filling and governing his universe? It can be only the outflowing life, energy, or influence which makes his presence everywhere felt, and by which He does his ceaseless work. Even a finite man is not like a dumb statue, from which no vital power proceeds, to leave its impress on other creatures. The streams of life course through us all, and sensibly affect every one who comes within the range of our influence. And if this is the case with men, must it not be immeasurably more so with the Lord himself? If beings who, at their best, are but imperfect images and likenesses of their Maker give forth life, how can *He* fail to give it forth in infinite abundance who in Himself *is* life?

There can be no doubt that a comprehensive view of our Heavenly Father must include what goes forth from Him as well as what is in Him. We cannot rightly consider Him apart from his constant operation and influence. And these are what is meant by his Holy Spirit. Indeed,

the primitive signification of the word "spirit" would naturally suggest this idea. In Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and many other languages, the word for "spirit" originally meant "breath." In our common version of the Scriptures, it is rendered by one or the other term, at the pleasure of the translator. The first place where it occurs is in the second verse of the Bible, where we read: "The earth was without form, and void: and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the *spirit of God* moved upon the face of the waters." Almost the next place in which we find it is in the following chapter, where it is written: "Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the *breath of life*." We might say with equal correctness, "The *breath* of God moved upon the face of the waters," or "He breathed the *spirit of life* into man's nostrils." Clearly enough, a certain divine proceeding influence is signified in both cases. So in many other passages of the Old Testament, as for example: "By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the *breath* of his mouth." "Thou sendest forth thy *spirit*, they are created, and thou renewest the face of the earth." Whither shall I go from thy *spirit?* or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" And when we come to the New Testament, we perceive no essential difference; as, for instance, in the nota-

ble passage in John: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the spirit." Here the word translated "spirit" is precisely the same as that translated "wind," so that we might rightly say: "The *spirit* breathes where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth." Again, on one of the occasions after his resurrection, when the Lord appeared to his disciples, we are told that He breathed on them, and said: "Receive ye the Holy Spirit." (I prefer the term "Holy Spirit" to "Holy Ghost," not because it differs at all in meaning, but because it is a more modern, and therefore a more intelligible, form of speech.)

These several examples should give a very definite idea of the Holy Spirit and its operations. What more perfect picture could we have than is afforded by the Lord breathing on his disciples? What clearer comparison could be suggested than that of the all-pervading atmosphere, whose influence is ever felt, though it is itself unseen? And when we remember that the Lord, wishing in his book of divine truth to give us a conception of his spirit, makes use of the common word for breath, or wind, or atmosphere, the conclusion is one from which there is no escape. The Holy Spirit is the outflowing life by virtue of

which the Lord God goes, as it were, out of and beyond Himself, and makes his power and presence felt in every part of the universe. He is like the sun — the great central sun — which is the infinite fountain of creation. But He does not anywhere dwell in splendid isolation. Like the solar rays of heat and light, a perpetual influence goes forth from Him to the ends of the earth and to every class and condition of his creatures. This influence can be nothing but the extension of his own life of perfect love and wisdom seeking to give itself to others, and chiefly to gain admission into the hearts and minds of men. The finite life of man, the spirit which he manifests, the influence which goes forth from him is full of imperfections. Not so with the Lord. His spirit is, in fact as well as in name, the *Holy* Spirit.

I believe that no one can thoughtfully and candidly examine the passages in the Bible which treat of the Holy Spirit, without acknowledging that the sense, in a large majority of instances, emphatically demands that the idea of a divine proceeding influence should be substituted for that of a divine person. In the numerous places where men are said to be full of the Holy Spirit, or to receive the Holy Spirit, there is no intelligible meaning, except by this construction. We can be filled with the divine influence, the sphere of infinite love and wisdom can rest upon us,

bringing us into close and intimate conjunction with the Lord our God. But if by the Holy Spirit in these passages is to be understood a divine person, we may well be at a loss how to explain them.

Indeed, it is difficult to see how the idea of the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit should ever have sprung up in the minds of men. Even the passages which seem to favor it the most are more easily explained on other grounds. When, for instance, it is said that at the Lord's baptism "the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him," which is the more likely, that the dove was actually a third person in the Godhead, or that the proceeding life or influence of the essential Divinity, which is the Father, in being communicated to the Humanity, which is the Son, was made to appear for the time being in this particular form? Why is it not a representative picture of the prophecy contained in these words from Isaiah: "The spirit of the Lord Jehovih is upon me, because Jehovah hath anointed me, to preach good tidings unto the meek?" In his Apocalyptic vision, John saw the Lord as a Lamb that had been slain; but no one has ever supposed that this lamb could be anything more than a representative or symbol of the Lord, or of some one of his divine characteristics; and surely the appearance of the dove is most naturally accounted for in the same manner.

Again, what is said of the Paraclete, or Comforter, may possibly appear to furnish some little support to the doctrine of a personal spirit. But the slightest examination and comparison of passages should be enough to dispel the idea. It is true, the Lord speaks of another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth, which was to come, when He had ascended. But in connection with this declaration, and indeed, as a part of it, He says, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you," thereby affirming that the descent of the Holy Spirit is but his way of drawing near to men, and dwelling in them.

It can hardly have escaped the notice of careful readers of the New Testament, that, in the first place, the Comforter or Holy Spirit, is peculiarly associated with the Lord in his divine humanity. It is the Lord Jesus who promises to send it, or to cause that it shall be sent. Secondly, there is an obvious connection between the coming of the Holy Spirit and the Lord's glorification and ascension. He said to his disciples, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." In another place it is written, that "the Holy Spirit was not yet, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." But after He was risen from the dead, He clearly and confessedly communicated the Holy Spirit to those who were with

Him. It was then that He breathed on his disciples, and saith unto them, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit." And in the Acts of the Apostles further accounts are given to the same effect.

Now what can be the meaning of this remarkable circumstance except that the Lord, by his assumption and glorification of humanity, brought down the divine influence to men more nearly and more powerfully than ever before? He, being one with the essential divinity, or the Father, was preëminently the medium of the divine life. But it was not until all the finite imperfections of the human nature had been removed through temptations, that the union of the Father and Son, of the essential divinity and the divine humanity, was fully consummated. When this was done, then without let or hindrance the divine influence could descend to all the degrees of life which humanity comprehends, and the Holy Spirit could be truly said to exist in its fulness on earth.

By an easy and natural transition we pass from the consideration of the Holy Spirit to that of regeneration. The two subjects are closely related to each other, and are significantly joined together in the Word. "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which

is born of the Spirit is spirit." No one can believe that anything less than a universal law of human life is here stated. Every man who lives in this world has a spiritual work to do. We are not born with all our faculties fully developed and perfected. We are not introduced all at once into the highest capabilities of our nature. But time, and the growth which comes with time, are needed, in order to bring a human being to the full measure of a man, that is, of an angel. So much as this is true under the most favorable circumstances in which men can be placed. It would be true, if there had never been any sin or disorder upon earth. But at the present day, almost as soon as we begin to live, we not only find ourselves surrounded by various influences, many of which are evil, but perceive that we have within us tendencies, neither few nor feeble, toward what is evil. It is a revelation of personal consciousness to every one that he has certain selfish and external desires, in the indulgence of which he *naturally* places his highest hopes of happiness. The slightest reflection will also show that unless these desires are somehow mastered they will gain the mastery. Where such a result is reached, the whole nature is perverted. The body, with its senses and appetites, and all the lower mental faculties which deal only with the things of this world, though forming a necessary part of the

human organism, were designed to be its servants, not its rulers. Until they have been brought into their proper position of subordination, man cannot be in the true order of his creation; he is in constant danger of violating the commandments, — of dishonoring father and mother, of killing, stealing, and bearing false witness, — in thought and desire if not in act. But let a heavenly life be quickened in him, let the spiritual man obtain dominion over the natural, and he becomes a true image and likeness of God, fulfilling the highest purposes of his existence. Nor is there any one, however strong his hereditary evil propensities may be, to whom this consummation is not possible.

It should be evident, however, that a work of such magnitude and importance cannot be accomplished instantaneously; nor do the Scriptures furnish any tangible ground for supposing that it can. The operations of divine Providence are never sudden. Sometimes the manifestation of them may appear sudden to men, because it was unforeseen and unexpected. But the events themselves never come to pass without due forethought and preparation. Consider, for instance, the processes of natural production and growth, which are suggested by the very word "regeneration," and presented in the Bible as its type. There is a particular moment in the life of each individual when he begins to breathe the air of

this outer world. Yet in reality that moment is but one in a long series of moments, and represents but one in a long series of developments, of which he is the subject. Birth would be impossible but for the previous embryonic life; and if one were born and nothing more, he would be forever a most imperfect specimen of humanity. Somewhat so must it be with the process by which man is made a complete spiritual being. The change cannot but be a gradual one. It may or may not be marked by striking incidents, which serve as the distinct signs of progress. One may, nor may not, be able to recall some particular circumstances which led him to turn from evil ways and to begin a new life. There is no inflexible rule which applies to all alike as regards the details of their conscious experience, but there must be a general resemblance in the manner in which men are regenerated. Little by little their sinful inclinations and habits must be overcome, and good and true influences be insinuated in the place of them.

First must come a consciousness of evil, and a desire to repent. The man must learn by self-examination, and by other means which will not be wanting to him, what particular evils are the most powerful, and threaten the greatest danger to his soul. Then he must faithfully and earnestly apply himself to the resistance of them. True repentance, be it observed, is not a mere

general confession of sinfulness, but the acknowledgment of one's own particular sins, accompanied by the sincere desire and effort to be delivered from their influence. It is easy for anybody to say of himself that he, in common with all other men, is a miserable sinner; but it is not so easy for him, if he finds that he is inclined to be self-willed, or passionate, or domineering, or covetous, or avaricious, to rise up against the evil in the earnest endeavor to put it away. Yet this is what must be done if he would truly repent and be born again.

When any one is thus repentant, knowing that he is a sinful man, and wishing from his heart to be freed from his iniquities, he becomes humble, and all self-confidence departs from him. He feels the need of a higher power than his own, and is ready to enter into a deep vital and personal relationship with his heavenly Father. Intellectually he may, in a certain sense, have believed in Him before; but he cannot have had the same genuine belief which he has now. "All religion," says Swedenborg, "is of the life." If this is true, then there can be no real religion which is not of the life; no religion worthy of the name which does not make its influence felt in every daily duty. And is it not most manifestly true? Is it not what the Lord himself teaches when He says: "If ye love me, keep my commandments." "Not every one that saith

unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven."

If a man is rightly instructed he will regard the Lord God as the one perfect being, to whom all evil stands in direct opposition. He is goodness itself and truth itself. Hence no one can wilfully do or cherish any evil without being guilty of sin against Him. "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done evil in thy sight," says David in the psalm; and the same may be truly said by every one who deliberately violates or disregards what he knows to be divinely just and right. "Shun evils as sins against God," is the great law of spiritual life for those who would be regenerated. Shun them because they are opposed to his holy will and subversive of his divine order. Shun them in affection and thought, no less than in outward actions. *All* evil, whether seen or unseen by mortal eye, is sin against the Lord, and there is a heavenly reason, if not an earthly one, for putting it away. Evidently no such work as is here proposed can be effected without internal conflict. The higher and lower parts of our nature — the heavenly man and the earthly man within us — cannot fail to be brought into antagonism with each other. The unregenerate natural will is not content to fall into its normal and proper position of subserviency. It is, however, mercifully provided by the

Lord that the understanding shall be, at first, elevated above the will. The memory is stored with the knowledge of what is good and true; and the ability to see the right is given in advance of the willingness to do it. Yet by diligently conforming to the truth, even when its behests are outwardly most unwelcome, the life is gradually changed, till finally we love, with the whole mind and heart, the things which were previously repugnant to us. So is the man born again, his baser nature taking its right place as the willing servant of the nobler, its appetites subdued, its restless longings satisfied, its false and persuasive reasonings, which would convert good into evil and evil into good, banished and driven out of sight.

One important truth remains to be considered. It is that man's regeneration is the Lord's work. But it will naturally be asked: How can this be, if man is a free agent and master of his own thoughts and actions? Truly, as we have previously seen, freedom is an indispensable condition of human existence and progress. Without it man would not be man; that is, he would not be the loving and thinking being who alone, among all living creatures, can lift up his heart in gratitude and praise to his heavenly Father. For, from their very nature, love, worship, thankfulness include the idea of freedom. If they are not free and spontaneous they are nothing. Still

it is not man who regenerates himself. It is the Lord who causes his regeneration.

For to the Lord belong all life, goodness, wisdom and power. He is the infinite source; men are the finite recipients. Whatever goodness, wisdom, or power men have is from Him. It seems to them like their own; it is given to them to use as their own; but it is really the Lord's in them. They live, not from themselves, but only *as* from themselves. His Holy Spirit — the influence of his love and wisdom — flows forth to them without ceasing. In the region of their mental consciousness they have the power either to receive or reject it; and on the choice they make their present and future happiness depends. If they receive it, they are conjoined with the Lord. If they reject it, they are separated from Him. It may not be known to them as the Lord's operation, or as anything divine, but only as an inward impulse which, if they yield to it, will lead them to depart from evil and to do good, to seek peace and to pursue it. In its largest sense, it may be said to comprise all good influences by which their spiritual states may be affected. If they disregard its promptings, they are confirmed in selfish and sinful states, which are but another name for hell. Yet, in case they choose the better course, they cannot justly claim any merit to themselves. The feeling which impelled them had not its origin in their own hearts,

but was imparted by the Lord. The truth which guided them was not the invention of their own minds, but came by divine revelation. They have simply consented to be governed by good, instead of evil influences.

The process is not unlike that by which the fruits of the earth are produced. The farmer ploughs the ground, sows the seed, and removes the weeds from time to time. Then he anxiously watches every sign until the crop is ripe for harvest. But when his barns are full and running over, of what has he to boast? Did he cause the grain to grow? Did he infuse the spirit of life into a single kernel of it? Or is it the wonderful productive power which is in nature that has done all the work? He indeed has done little or nothing more than to avail himself of that power. He knew that it was lurking in the sunlight and rain and the bountiful earth, awaiting an opportunity to operate, and he gave it an opportunity. This is the extent of his efforts: he has given an opportunity to the living soul of nature to utilize its deathless and untiring energies.

Even so with man's regeneration. Divine and heavenly influences are always descending to every human heart. The Holy Spirit, like heat and light from the sun, flows forth unceasingly and without measure. In it is the power and the burning, quenchless endeavor to form anew the spirit of every man, that is, to *re*form and

regenerate him. It waits only for opportunities. It waits only for the man to yield himself up, and, of his own free will, to become a consenter and coöperator with it. When he does this, the appearance is that he has accomplished a great work by his own unaided efforts. But it is not really so. The work is the Lord's, as much as if man had no freedom, although it could never be performed were he not in freedom.

Did Jehovah bring the children of Israel out of Egypt? Assuredly he did. But did not they take every step of their own free volition? Did they not voluntarily submit themselves to his guidance? There can be no doubt of it. In like manner, if we take the corresponding spiritual journey, it will be because we freely consent to do so. Yet the Lord is our leader all the while. He brings us, by means of our free agency, not in spite of it, from our natural house of bondage to his holy land of eternity.

SIXTH LECTURE.

THE SPIRITUAL WORLD.

It is a common impression among Christian believers that, while we live in this world, little or nothing can be known about the life to come. Dense clouds of worldliness and materialism have, during the bygone centuries, so gathered around and imprisoned the human consciousness, that but little knowledge or perception remains of the spiritual skies above and beyond them. The same cause has also operated to obscure the meaning of Scripture. Men have not seen how full it was of information concerning the other world and its inhabitants. They have not noticed the many statements and inferences on this subject, which lay waiting in the very letter of the Word, for some one to come and find them. Yet there they are, like gold on the surface of the ground.

Let us begin our consideration of the matter by endeavoring to see what the Scriptures teach us. Throughout the Old Testament it is no unusual thing to find mention made of supernatural beings. Angels are often represented as appearing to men. They came to Lot at Sodom, to

Hagar by the fountain in the wilderness, to Jacob in his dreams. They were seen by Gideon and Manoah, Ezekiel and Zechariah. The angel of the Lord was said to go before the Israelites in the desert. David is led to sing in the Psalms: "Because thou hast made Jehovah who is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. *For He shall give his angels charge over thee*, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." Again we read: "The angel of Jehovah encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them." In short, the reader or hearer of the Jewish Scriptures could not have failed to be familiar with the thought that there are beings called angels, unseen by natural eyes, who are closely connected with men on earth and deeply interested in their welfare.

When we come to the New Testament, we find still more conclusive and abundant evidence. The very first chapter tells us that "the angel of the Lord" appeared to Joseph in a dream. To Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, and to the Virgin Mary, angels presented themselves with divine messages. An angel appeared to the shepherds keeping watch over their flock by night, and they heard the joyful songs of a multitude of the heavenly host. Indeed, the opening

chapters of the gospel narratives have been poetically styled "the overture of angels." Nor do these heavenly appearances and ministrations cease, as the story proceeds. It is said that after the Lord's temptations "angels came and ministered unto Him." In the agony at Gethsemane "there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven strengthening Him." As at his entrance on the scenes of earth, angels were present and prominent, so was it at his departure. They met the women who came sorrowing to the sepulchre with the announcement, "He is not here, He is risen." John the evangelist saw many angels. In one place in the Apocalypse he describes them as "ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands." Nor is it angels alone who make their presence felt. The Lord is constantly represented in the gospels as contending with evil spirits, not only in direct personal warfare, but as He met them possessing the bodies and torturing the souls of human beings. It is written that as a general rule "He suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew Him." Yet sometimes they *did* speak by the mouths of those whom they possessed, saying: "Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to torment us before the time? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God." In fact, the New Testament introduces us to a whole world of invisible beings, good and

evil. Not the least significant passage is that in which the Lord, speaking of little children, says: "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven."

But where are these angels and evil spirits, and how do they come to us? The answer is clear. They are in the spiritual world, and that world is in intimate relations with the natural. It is not far off in space, but here, close at hand, within and around us. We cannot see it with material eyes, nor feel it with material hands; for it is not a material world. But spiritually, that is interiorly, we come in contact with it; and its inhabitants are always with us. For we ourselves are spiritual beings. We are not made solely of flesh and bones. But we have a higher life and a higher nature within these corporeal frames. The essential man is a loving and thinking being, — in other words, a spirit, — who, for a time, dwells in a natural body. We do not see the angels; but neither do we see the spiritual part of one another, — the real vital part, which makes us to be what we are. Our natural eyes can help us only to see natural things; they do not look beyond the body to the soul. He who would behold spiritual objects must use spiritual eyes. And such eyes belong to every man, as a part of his human organism. They

are in his spiritual body, of which Paul speaks when he says, "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." The spiritual body is something which now is, not something which will be solely in the future. Its eyes are not usually opened, nor its other senses and faculties consciously exercised during man's life on earth. The reason is, because he has a special work on earth to do. Were it not so, he would never have been placed here. It is the work of preparation for heaven. As the foundations of a house must be laid in and on the ground, so upon this earthly life of ours the eternal foundations of character must rest. The natural body is the means of bringing man into connection with the external world. As long as he is held in association with it, he looks through its eyes, and listens through its ears, and none but natural sights and sounds are reported to him. Yet it is possible, and, in rare instances, it has been permitted, that the senses of the spiritual body should be opened while one is living on earth.

Again seeking the testimony of Scripture, we shall find it most direct and convincing. On a certain occasion the prophet Elisha and his servant were in great apparent danger on account of their enemies, the Syrians. Elisha's prophetic power had several times been the means of saving his countrymen from the stratagems of their foe, and had attracted the attention of the Syrian

king. One of his servants had said to him, "Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber." Against Elisha, therefore, his efforts were especially directed. Learning that he was in Dothan, he sent thither "horses and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about." Then the narrative continues as follows: "And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and with chariots. And his servant said unto him. Alas, my master, how shall we do? And he answered, fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, O Jehovah, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And Jehovah opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."

There they were, the armies of the Lord, and the protectors of Israel, ready to do the service required of them. No one but the prophet had beheld them, or been conscious of their presence. But when the young man's eyes were opened, he beheld them too. Not, however, with natural eyes. These were open before. Some other eyes must have been brought into use, in order to see the heavenly host. And what eyes could they have been but those of the spiritual body?

What beings could have been revealed to his astonished vision but spiritual beings, inhabitants of the spiritual world, whose guardian care had been extended over him, without his knowledge?

So likewise, according to the record of the Apocalypse, John was in the spirit on the Lord's day, in the Isle of Patmos. As a consequence of being "in the spirit," heaven, as he says, was opened to him. He beheld one like unto the Son of Man. Angel after angel passed before his sight. In the whole account there is no indirectness or obscurity. But supernatural scenes are witnessed, and supernatural voices are heard by the beloved disciple. He was not the sole inhabitant of Patmos, but no others could see the things which he saw. Wonderful as they were, they were all unknown to every one excepting him. For his were the only spiritual eyes that were opened. Had they not been opened, the Apocalypse had never been written, and all the events described in it would have passed unperceived by men, like other spiritual occurrences which are taking place continually.

From these plain scriptural premises we can form but one conclusion; and that is, as was previously stated, that the spiritual world is an inner world, a world which includes our own spiritual selves, a world which could not possibly be nearer to us than it is, and whose inhabitants

are our constant, though unseen, companions. Understanding this, we have an explanation of all the angelic or other preternatural appearances of which the Scriptures speak. There was an opening of the spiritual sight of those who witnessed them. Such, indeed, is the natural inference in every case. Zacharias was executing the priest's office before God in the order of his course, when, as it is written, "there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense." This angel did not come flying down from the skies and walk into the temple through the door. If such had been the manner of his approach, he could not have escaped the notice of those who waited outside for Zacharias, wondering that he tarried so long. But when it was time for him to appear and deliver his message, there he stood, and the spiritual eyes of the aged priest were opened to behold him. The angel who announced to the shepherds the glad tidings of great joy, and the choirs that joined with him their songs, were not visitors from other planets. He "came upon" the shepherds, it is not said whence or how; but suddenly it was made evident that he was not alone. Their eyes were opened to see the heavenly forms, and their ears to hear the heavenly voices. We need look no farther, nor try to conjure up any more elaborate theory to account for these and similar occurrences.

The same facts are sufficient to explain all the phenomena of death. It is man's natural body only that dies. His spirit is withdrawn and separated from that body, but otherwise suffers no change. He goes to sleep as to this world, that he may awake to the clear knowledge and perception of the other world. His natural senses are closed, never again to be renewed, and his spiritual senses are opened, never again to grow dormant and imperceptible. The earth, and all that is upon it, fade away from sight, and the inner world of spirit dawns upon his consciousness. The faces of his friends who still live in the body disappear from view, and he comes into open communion with those who have gone before him; he sees the angels who have guarded him in life, and have attended him through the valley of the shadow of death.

It is a mistake to suppose that natural death is a curse. No such narrow meaning can be rightly drawn from any expressions of Scripture. When we read in Genesis that God said respecting the tree of knowledge, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;" — whatever be our method of interpretation, we cannot rationally understand that natural death is referred to; for it is an evident fact that, in the day of their eating the forbidden fruit, they did not naturally die. The only death which is to be feared is that which comes to man when he

violates the laws of divine order, and wilfully places himself outside the pale of divine influences. But the death of the body takes place in accordance with the originally established conditions of our being. It is as perfect a manifestation of the Lord's love and wisdom as birth itself. It is an orderly step in human progress. To those who have lived as the Lord desires and teaches them to live, it is a joyful change, giving opportunity for the full and unrestrained development of their faculties, and opening before them endless possibilities of happiness. Not cursed, but "*blessed* are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow with them."

One who passes into the other life is in all essential respects precisely the same human being as before. He exists in human form, and possesses every bodily as well as mental faculty. But his body, as was explained, is now spiritual, not natural. He finds himself surrounded by men and women, who, like himself, began their life on the earth. There are no angels but human angels, no devils or evil spirits but those who have gone from the natural world. When God made man in his image, after his likeness, He reached the crowning work of his creation. It is not possible that there should be any creature higher than the image and likeness of the Creator.

Let us again turn to the Scriptures for instruction on the various points which have been mentioned. First, as to the fact that death is but the continuation of life. What could be more explicit than the Lord's declaration to the Sadducees: "Now that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For He is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for to Him all are living." Here is a direct statement to the effect that those whom men call dead are really alive. In God's sight, if not in man's, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were living at the time when the Lord was in the world; and they are living still. Moses and Elias also were seen by the three disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration. David said of his little son that died, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." In the Prophet Hosea we read: "After two days will He revive us; in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight." The Lord himself also rose on the third day and appeared to his disciples. They could not have seen Him with their natural eyes, for He stood in the midst of them when the doors were shut. He was visible only to the spiritual sight. He had previously said, "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, ye may be also." He had said, furthermore, to Peter, "Whither I go thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterwards." Again, "Because I live, ye shall live also." "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." There is nothing equivocal in these sayings. They all point in one direction. They all go to show that there is an eternal life beyond the present life, and that death is but the passage from the one to the other.

It is also a noticeable fact that angels and spirits have appeared in human form, when they have been seen by men. Manoah's wife beheld "the angel of the Lord." Afterwards, in telling her husband of the circumstance, she said: "A *man* of God came unto me." Again: "The angel of God came unto the woman as she sat in the field; but Manoah, her husband, was not with her. And the woman made haste, and ran, and shewed her husband, and said unto him, Behold, the *man* hath appeared unto me that came unto me the other day." Nor is this the only passage in which angels are spoken of as men. Those who came to Lot, as he sat in the gate of Sodom, are called by both names. So, too, in Luke's Gospel, it is said that the women who sought the Lord's sepulchre on the morning of his resurrection saw "two *men* in shining gar-

ments;" but in John, the expression is, "two angels in white." Thus not only were the angels in human form, but they were clothed. Not only did they look like men, but spoke words which men could understand. Still further, we may read in the Apocalypse of an angel of such majestic presence that John was impelled to fall down and worship him. But the angel said: "See thou do it not; for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book; worship God." Which of his fellow-servants, or which of his brother prophets, this angel was, we cannot tell. It is enough that by these words he places himself on the level of humanity.

These considerations lead to the belief that heaven and hell are from the human race. There is no ground for supposing that angels are a superior race of beings, or that devils are fallen angels; but they all belong to the one great family of man. The ancient word for "angel" literally means "messenger," and it is often so translated in the Scriptures. John the Baptist, for instance, was the messenger or angel sent before the Lord, to prepare the way before Him. All who are the bearers of divine messages or influences to men, — who, in a spirit of love and self-forgetfulness, minister to the needs of others, — are, in the widest sense, the Lord's angels. Chief among them, as we should expect, are those

whose earthly life is finished, and whose outward visible home is heaven. They are not a distinct class, except so far as all good men are a distinct class, by virtue of being always ready and eager to do the will of their Lord. Nor are there any evil spirits or devils which were not born of the race of man. The words "Devil" and "Satan," meaning, respectively, by their derivation, "accuser" and "adversary," signify no particular being, but the aggregate power of evil and falsity as embodied in hell. Men who have separated themselves from the Lord by disobeying his commandments cannot find a home in his heaven of angels. They make for themselves another and altogether different abode; and the influence which goes forth from them is diabolical and infernal. There is no other source of opposition to our Heavenly Father but that which they create. When it is said that the Lord, while in the world, was tempted of the devil, the meaning is that all the concentrated evil of hell put forth its utmost efforts against Him. Evil, whether in the abstract or the concrete, is the one great "adversary" of man. Evil is his sole "accuser" before God and his brethren. Men, so far as they embody evil loves or false principles, may be correctly termed devils or satans. Hence the Lord, addressing his disciples, says, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" Again, speaking on a certain oc-

casion to Peter, he exclaimed, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

Leaving, however, this branch of our subject, let us pass to some other points which it naturally suggests. If heaven and hell are from the human race, and if those who go into the spiritual world are substantially the same beings that they were on earth, it follows that the happiness or misery, the harmony or discord, of their life must depend on essentially the same conditions as before. In other words, what gives them pleasure here will give them pleasure hereafter; what causes pain or suffering here will cause pain or suffering hereafter. And there, as here, the rule will hold, that happiness is determined by the inward state, rather than by outward circumstances. Truly does Milton say, —

> "The mind is its own place, and, in itself,
> Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven."

Nothing, as we know, is more common than for those who possess every external blessing to be mentally restless and wretched; while, on the other hand, many a peasant is happier than many a king. To be placed in Paradise itself would be no passport to eternal bliss, unless the mind and heart are at peace. So we may feel sure that, in order to come into the exterior life of heaven with any capacity for enjoying it, we

must first come into the interior state of heaven; or, rather, that state must, somehow or other, be produced within us. This is what the Lord teaches, when He says: "Behold, the kingdom of God is within you." In a word, heaven and hell are, in their essential nature, states of mind.

Nor is it difficult to see what kind of states they are. The Bible shows that love to the Lord and love to the neighbor are the two great principles on which hang all the law and the prophets. Such being the case, they must be the cardinal laws of life for angels as well as men. The order and happiness of heaven must depend on the observance of them. No one can be a true citizen of the heavenly kingdom who does not love the Lord above all and his neighbor as himself. A man's love is his life. His ruling love determines the quality of his life. That which he chiefly loves is the central object of all his efforts, and the source of his greatest pleasure. Accordingly those who are governed by the two loves which have been referred to must find in the exercise of them their highest enjoyment.

But what does this imply? Love for others is not a mere sentiment, an ecstatic feeling of good will, which is content to remain shut up in the breast without going any farther. But like the divine love itself, of which it is the finite image, it can be satisfied only with doing good and imparting happiness. We are therefore brought

to the conclusion that the life of heaven is a state of active usefulness. In the many mansions, — that is, the numberless societies or communities of which our Father's house consists, — every loving heart and hand is busy with joyous work. This is the final fruitage of human life and growth. There is no happiness in this world or the next, to be compared with that of making others happy.

The uses or employments of the angels must be as numerous as their opportunities for doing good. Not only in their societies, where they are brought into constant and intimate relations with each other, but outside of them, in countless ways, they find occasion to exercise their love. Allusion has been made to their guardianship of men on earth. So universal and assiduous is it, that no change can take place in the state of those with whom they are connected, without their feeling it; insomuch that it is written: "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." One of their ministries is to attend those who are leaving, or about to leave, the natural world, from whom they seek to drive away all feeling of danger and fear, surrounding them with the peaceful atmosphere of their own presence. Another ministry is to take care of the infants and little children who are daily passing by hundreds into the spiritual world, and of whom the Lord has

said: "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God." In accordance with this saying, they are taken up into heaven, where angel-mothers must nurse and tend them, and angel-teachers instruct and guide them in the way of eternal life. In truth, there are no limits to the service which angels may perform for their brethren who stand in need of it.

But those who yield to their evil inclination, and confirm themselves in selfish and worldly loves, will take no pleasure in these pure delights. Heaven will be no heaven to them; for they are inwardly at variance with it. What they desire is an eternity of self-gratification, not of neighborly love; unlimited power over others, not the means of doing them service. And so they turn away from heaven, in search of something more in agreement with their own life; and the home which they make for themselves is hell. It is not a place of punishment, into which they are forced by the arbitrary will and power of God; but they go to it of their own accord, as the abode which suits and pleases them best. They are not punished nor tormented, except so far as is necessary for the maintenance of external order, and for each other's protection. Hell-fire is no outwardly consuming flame, but the inward burning passion of self-love, which will not allow itself to be quenched. Thus every

man judges himself. He who loves goodness, loves heaven ; and he who loves evil, loves hell. Goodness is its own reward. Evil is its own punishment. There is no other condemnation than that which is mentioned in the gospel: "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."

SEVENTH LECTURE.

DEATH, RESURRECTION, AND JUDGMENT.

FROM the general doctrine of the spiritual world, as explained in the last lecture, follow many definite conclusions, which it may be useful and interesting to consider somewhat in detail. By way of considering them, let us attempt the task of watching, with the mind's eye, the departing spirit of a human being, from the moment of death until he reaches his final abode in heaven or hell.

Death, we must remember, affects only the natural body. It does not in any respect change the essential man himself. Sometimes the body is prostrated by sudden disease or accident. But more commonly its forces are gradually spent. The man lies on the bed of sickness; day by day he grows weaker and weaker, till at last his physical life ebbs away from him. While this experience continues, there is often much bodily suffering. One thing, however, which is most pleasant to contemplate, has been frequently noticed by physicians and others who are familiar with the scenes of death; and that is, that when the brain is clear and active, and physical pain

is not too intense, a calm and peaceful happiness finally settles down upon the soul, all doubt and fear respecting the coming change are taken away, and the man feels that it is good for him to die. Instances are not rare in which the spiritual sight is actually opened, and the departing spirit has momentary glimpses of coming realities. All of us can doubtless bear witness to the placid expression, amounting sometimes even to a smile, which often illumines the lifeless countenance after the last struggle is over, as if invisible hands had smoothed away the furrows of care, and blotted out the remembrance of suffering.

If we believe that the spiritual world is ever near, that its inhabitants are in constant attendance upon us, and that death is but the awakening of a human being to the consciousness of his spiritual surroundings, then we can hardly help believing that the angels of heaven have their part to perform in the process of transition. They themselves have been, as we have seen, men and women living upon the earth. Some of them in their celestial mansions have been associated, as unseen guardians and helpers, with their brethren whose fleshly garments are not yet cast off. The ruling principle of their life is love to God and man. Their chief happiness consists in making others happy. And shall they be indifferent to the resurrection into spir-

itual life of even the least among the children of men? Shall they offer no welcome to the new-comer? Shall they extend to him no helping hand? Such suppositions are incredible. The angels are the loving and gentle messengers of the Lord Jesus Christ himself, who has all power in heaven and on earth. He is the resurrection and the life. He has shown to all who believe in Him that there is no death. He has said to every one of his true disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you. . . . . Because I live, ye shall live also." The Lord is the only source of strength and comfort at the time of death, as at all other times. From Him proceeds the deep sense of peace which sustains man's soul. And the angels are forever working with Him, the willing mediums of his holy influence. We cannot surely doubt their blessed ministry at the critical period when the spirit is withdrawn from its earthly tabernacle. Their mission is to bring quiet and assurance, not only to him who is removed, but to all who are in such interior sympathy with him that they can enter into his joy and open their hearts to the heavenly benediction. The angels who sat, "the one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain," and who consoled the sorrowing women at the sepulchre with the message, "He is not here; He is risen," are not the only ones who have tried to comfort saddened hearts, al-

though no visible form has appeared, and no audible word has been spoken.

The dying person, then, comes first into a state of the most perfect tranquillity. He seems to fall asleep. There is no doubt that he is for a while unconscious of all that goes on around him, while the process of severing the ties between his spirit and his body advances to its completion. The heart no longer beats; the blood no longer flows; all motion ceases. But the resurrection from the dead is not usually effected until the third day. "After two days will He revive us; in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight." Here we have a clear declaration of our universal human experience, made even more clear and emphatic by the rising of the Lord himself on the third day, and his being seen by his disciples with their spiritual eyes. As the going to sleep was gradual, so the waking up must be. Little by little a state of full consciousness returns, and the man perceives that he is not dead, but living. Persons and objects reveal themselves to his open sight, not unlike those which he has been accustomed to see in the natural world. For the doctrine of the relationship and interdependence of the two worlds — of nature and of spirit — carries with it the idea of their essential similitude as regards all visible things. Both of them are made to be the abode of man, and are in perfect conformity

with his condition and needs. As the natural body is vivified by the spiritual body, so the natural world draws its life from the spiritual world, and must bear an unmistakable likeness to it.

But to proceed with our account of man's resurrection. We must remember that he who rises is precisely the same as he who dies. He has left behind him no part of himself but his material body. All his mental faculties — his affections, desires, hopes, and aspirations — remain unchanged. More than this, the particular state of thought and feeling in which he was when death came upon him is continued into the other life. His natural memory is quick and active. The recollection of his earthly existence, with all that pertains to it, is vividly present with him. As soon as he is made aware that he has come into the other world, his thoughts turn to those who have come before him. He proves the truth of what David said respecting his little son, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." Parents and children, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, friends and acquaintances, who have, for a time, been separated from each other, are all brought together again, and remain together as long as they desire. Nor can they fail to recognize one another. Though the natural face and form are wanting, the personal characteristics will shine out through the lineaments of the spiritual body with transparent

clearness. As surely as the spirit of Samuel was recognized by Saul, when brought to view by the woman of Endor, so surely shall we be able to know our friends who have gone in advance of us, when we too come into that land whence no traveller returns.

The fact that every man after death continues to be himself leads to certain other inferences. One is, that comparatively few are ready to go at once to their final place in heaven or hell. Little children, concerning whom we read that "of such is the kingdom of God," are taken up immediately into the Heavenly Father's house, where they abide forever. We can conceive also that there are some adult persons, even in this degenerate age of the world, who are so far purged of all earthly dross that, as soon as they die, they are in every sense already angels. On the other hand, it seems but too apparent that there are human beings so completely given over to their sinful lusts and passions that they must pass into the spiritual world possessing the manifest nature of devils. But the great majority of those who are removed by death in mature age present, at least to the outward appearance, a mixture of good and evil, truth and error. Not that the character is unformed. But it abounds in inconsistencies, which must be removed before the man can show himself to be what he really is. In other words, there are clinging to almost

every human life certain worldly accretions, which veil or obscure its essential nature. The external manifestation is not a true index of the internal quality. One who is interiorly good may, for instance, have formed such false ideas concerning God that he is by no means prepared to go and live among the angels, all of whom love the Lord with the whole heart and soul. In this category are to be included the thousands who are dying yearly from heathen lands. It is impossible to believe that an infinitely loving Father has called them into being only that they may perish eternally, because, through no fault of their own, they are without the direct knowledge of Him and his precepts. But the truth is, that none of them are left in total darkness, and that those who walk according to the little light they have — which involves at least some slight conception of a distinction between right and wrong, and some sense of accountability to a higher power — illustrate the principle contained in the Lord's declaration, "Behold, the kingdom of God is within you." The essence of heaven is in their hearts ; and when they come into the other life they are ready to receive the truth of heaven also. But they cannot do this in a moment. The accumulated effects of their untoward circumstances cannot be instantaneously swept away. So they must wait awhile on the threshold of the spiritual world, until they are suitably instructed and

prepared for their eternal homes. Others again, who at heart are evil, loving themselves supremely, and having no genuine regard for the divine commandments, may have the outward aspect of children of light. They, too, must wait in the ante-chamber till their internal and external life come into agreement with each other. Evidently there cannot be many of the human family, constituted as it is at this day, who have no disguises to cast off before they can be seen altogether in their true colors.

This reception-room, or entrance-hall, of the spiritual world, if we may so designate it, is called by Swedenborg the world of spirits. It is neither heaven nor hell, but is intermediate between them. Its necessity is implied in all that we know of human nature. Its existence may be inferred from many things which the Scriptures teach. Take, for example, the subject of judgment. Unless we believe in the resurrection of the material body and in a final judgment of all men in the natural world, we are forced to the conclusion that there must be in the spiritual world some particular place where judgment is effected. That place cannot be heaven or hell, for man does not go to heaven or hell till after he is judged. Without reference to the manner in which the judgment is accomplished, it is enough to say that to every one coming into the spiritual world must be given full opportunity

for the determination and manifestation of his character, while at the same time there is provided for him a definite place of departure to his heavenly or infernal abode.

He whom we suppose to have died, finds himself, therefore, with returning consciousness, in the world of spirits. He enters into active association with those who are there, and remains a longer or shorter period, according to the nature and extent of the work which needs to be done in him. His first state is, as we have seen, a continuation of his state in this world. He is, interiorly and exteriorly, exactly the same that he was here, except that he has relinquished his natural body. If he is in internal and real accord with the angels, there are yet things outwardly adhering to him, which are not angelic. Pernicious habits, ignorantly and thus innocently formed, wrong conceptions of God and religion, false ideas of life and duty, — these or other external defects unfit him to go immediately to heaven. After a while they become apparent to him, and he wishes to be freed from them. The comparatively external state in which he was at first, passes away, and is succeeded by a more internal state, in which he beholds himself truly as he is, and seeks wise guidance and instruction. Every false and evil influence which has hitherto had a superficial hold upon him loses all its power. This second state is one of perfect transparency,

and is described by the Lord's words, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known." All concealment becomes impossible. Man's inmost thoughts and feelings shine forth as in clear day. The light of heaven, which is divine truth, searches him through and through, and he has no alternative but to bring his external actions into accordance with what that light discloses. He whose ruling love is evil, being no longer able to hide it, joins himself to his like, and acts out his nature without restraint. He whose ruling love is good, being freed from all external incumbrances, is like one set at liberty. He rejoices in the truth and in all that it reveals, gladly opens his heart to its influence, and associates himself with those who are in deepest sympathy with him.

This is the judgment. No arbitrary decree goes forth from the Almighty, calling some to everlasting happiness and consigning others to eternal misery. Such is not the divine method of dealing with men, either here or hereafter. But together with the natural body the curtain which hides the internal character of every man is swept away, and he stands forth in the clearer light of the spiritual world self-judged. There will be strange disclosures in the world of spirits when the veil is thus withdrawn, and each one

is revealed to himself and to others exactly as he is. Truly does the Lord say respecting that time, "Many that are first shall be last, and the last first."

When, therefore, he who has departed from his natural body and passed through the preliminary period of existence in the world of spirits comes at length into that state in which his interior nature is clearly laid open, he is judged by passing judgment on himself. If heaven is within him he goes and makes his home in heaven. And he goes to his own particular place there. In all the infinite creation of God no two persons or things are exactly alike. Every man differs in some respects from every other man. Each one is made with capacity to fill a certain place throughout eternity, which can be filled by no one else. Accordingly, heaven consists of innumerable societies or communities of angels, as the Lord plainly tells us when he says, "In my Father's house are many mansions." All the angels in their various societies are animated by the one unselfish impulse of love to the Lord and their fellow-men; and all the societies are held in definite and orderly relations to each other by the same universal feeling. Whoever goes to live among them must likewise find his chief joy in doing good and adding what little he may to the sum of human happiness.

But those who scorn these pure delights, —

whose hearts are given over to sinful desires and passions, — who care not for their neighbor's welfare, but only for their own selfish interest and pleasure, — will turn away from heaven in the other world even as they turned away from it in this. It is natural for all men to think that they wish to go to heaven; but such is far from being the case. It is precisely what many of them are wholly unwilling to do, and cannot by any means be persuaded to do. All the time that they are living on the earth they close their hearts to heaven and its influences. Heaven is goodness, truth, purity, innocence, love, and usefulness. Unless this heaven is within us we shall never see any heaven round about us. Passing into the other life, we shall have the same aversion to it which we had here. Its pure atmosphere of loving kindness will fill us with pain and loathing. The only reason why hell exists is because there are those among the children of men who are unwilling to accept heaven. They reject the gracious invitation which is ever extended to them, and deliberately casting true happiness behind them, form communities of their own where they may with the least possible restriction act out their evil nature. They are pursued by no divine thirst for vengeance or demand for retribution. He who is "kind to the unthankful and the evil" cannot permit even them to endure any needless suffering. He can inflict, or cause to be

inflicted, on them no punishment beyond what is for their good, as serving to withhold them from acts of malice and violence, and to maintain external order.

One more topic remains for our brief consideration. It is that of the constant connection of angels and spirits in the other world with men on earth. The friend who leaves us at death does not take any long journey. He is not necessarily separated from us at all, except as to the natural appearance. So far as our relation towards him is that of true spiritual love and sympathy, he continues to be near us; and we are helped and strengthened by his presence. In that inner world of spirit, which holds the whole great family of man, our souls are joined to his by ties which cannot be broken. It is true we do not see him with our eyes. We have no outward conscious dealings with him, or with any other spirits and angels. Their influence descends to us as something internal and impersonal, like that of the Lord himself. Open and direct intercourse with the inhabitants of the other world (except in the few instances where it may come unsought, being permitted for special providential purposes) is abnormal, dangerous, and unlawful. To seek such intercourse, or to hanker after it, is entirely contrary to the true order of our being. Those who accept Swedenborg as a teacher have little or nothing in common with

the so-called "Spiritualists," although not unfrequently confounded with them. But while we are forbidden to lift the veil which divides the other world from ours, there is inestimable comfort in knowing that that world is close at hand, around and within us, that the loved ones who have passed from natural sight are not far off, that death is but a sleep and an awakening, no more to be feared than any other step in our progress, and finally, that the Lord God is not an arbitrary despot, but a kind and loving father, whose mode of dealing with us is forever the same, and whose Providence is as watchful and tender hereafter as here, following us if we ascend up into heaven, and not forgetting or forsaking us though we make our bed in hell.

EIGHTH LECTURE.

MARRIAGE.

ANY consideration of the system of religious truth contained in Swedenborg's writings would be incomplete if no mention were made of his teachings concerning marriage, or the laws of divine Providence in the distinction and relation of the sexes. One entire volume, written when he was about eighty years old, is devoted to this subject; and occasional allusions to it are found here and there throughout his published works. I am further impelled to speak on this point on account of the frequent misrepresentations (often arising, doubtless, from an imperfect examination and understanding of the facts involved, rather than from any deliberate intention of falsifying them), which have been made and circulated respecting it.

Let me then say at the outset, that Swedenborg presents a conception of the relation between man and woman, which is pure and exalted beyond that of any other writer, — that he regards the marriage covenant as something peculiarly sacred, never to be lightly entered into, and never to be dissolved except for reasons

which are morally and legally sufficient, — and that he invests with new significance the Christian institutions of family and home, while he reiterates and emphasizes their transcendent importance. If he distinguishes among the ways in which the laws of marriage are violated, representing some of them as lighter and less fatal evils than others, he does no more than many moralists have done and are doing in their attempts to deal with a vexed problem of social science.

Turning, as ever, to the Holy Scriptures, he bids us observe that the distinction between the sexes is fundamental. "From the beginning of the creation God made them male and female." That the human race should exist in two great halves, one of which is man and the other woman, was a part of the original plan of the Creator. It enters into the eternal design of building up a heaven of angels from the human race. It is an important means of bringing men into the true image and likeness of God. Accordingly we read in Genesis: "In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made He him; male and female created He them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam (or man) in the day when they were created." He called *their* name man. Not the male alone, or the female alone, was the full image of the divine Father, but both together, from the very day when they were created.

Now what do we mean by an image and likeness of the Lord? Something more, surely, than any mere physical resemblance. The body of a man is, as we know, the least important part of him. It is, indeed, scarcely a part of him at all, but simply the material covering which he wears during his earthly life. The man himself is a soul or spirit, whose inner and essential life consists of affections and thoughts, which need the body merely as an instrument for giving themselves outward expression. It is the soul, therefore, which must be specially designated, when man is said to be made in the image, after the likeness of God.

In previous lectures due consideration has been given to the subject of the divine nature. We have seen that the Lord God is, in his essence, love and wisdom. These two constitute, if we may so speak, his mind and life. They are Himself, — his infinite and perfect personality. They are imaged, as we have also seen, in the mind, or spiritual nature, of every human being. As God is love and wisdom, so man is will and understanding. His will was formed to be the receptacle of divine love or goodness, and his understanding to be the receptacle of divine wisdom or truth. In proportion as he suffers this intention to be effected in him, he is filled with the Lord's own life, and moulded more completely in the Lord's own image.

But the duality which is here indicated does not exist merely in the individual. It is found in even a more marked degree in the human race considered as a whole, and it is also found throughout the entire domain of nature. The name we there give it is bisexuality. The male is one half, and the female is the other half, of the divine image and likeness. Hence, when we are told in the Scriptures that "God created man in his own image, male and female created He them," the meaning is that man and woman are to each other relatively as love and wisdom are in Him from whom their life proceeds. Not that either of them is exclusively a form of wisdom or a form of love, or consists of will alone, or of intellect alone, or is wholly destitute of mental qualities which the other may possess in greater measure. But there is a difference in the ways in which they receive the Lord's life and in the proportions which its two essential elements bear in their respective natures. In man's nature, wisdom, truth, and intellect take the lead. In woman's nature, love, goodness, and affection take the lead. No inspired teacher is needed to tell us that the prominent masculine characteristics are those which centre in reason and judgment, and that the distinctive traits of the feminine character have their basis in feeling and emotion. Man is therefore, by comparison, hard, dogmatic, unyielding, aggressive. Woman is gentle and

sympathetic. He reaches his conclusions by slow and labored processes of thought; she, by quick perception and intuition. His nature is relatively large, strong, and coarse; hers is delicate, subtle, refined. Bravery in him is fortitude in her. His greater strength is offset by her greater endurance. Their physical differences are but the types of mental and spiritual ones. In creating a man, the Lord does not fashion a body, and then summon a soul to come and dwell in it. But the flow of life and the direction of all creative effort are from within outwards, — from the internal to the external, — from the spiritual to the natural. The body lives from the soul, not the soul from the body. The two come into existence together; and out of the very depths of the soul — from the inmost recesses of its being — proceeds that influence which determines whether the bodily form shall be moulded after the pattern of a man, or receive the softer outlines of woman's grace and beauty.

Here, then, we have our starting-point in the consideration of this great subject. The distinction between the sexes is a radical one, — a distinction of minds and souls. There is nothing in man which is not masculine, nothing in woman which is not feminine. But though they are thus unlike, they are not unequal. They are the two halves of a great whole, one of which was designed to complete and supplement the other

It is impossible for them to exchange places. The man can never be a woman, and the woman can never be a man. They are not fitted to fill the same positions in life, or to discharge the same duties. In their education and training the primary question to be considered is not one of natural rights and privileges to which either of them is supposed to be entitled; but rather, how can the distinctive qualities of each be brought to the highest perfection? The object should be to make the boy most thoroughly manly and efficient in the work which belongs to a man; and to make the girl most thoroughly womanly, and capable of performing those duties which, from the very necessities of her nature, commonly fall to a woman's lot.

These considerations bring us to our second main proposition, which is, that man and woman, regarded as spiritual beings, were divinely intended for each other. When the Lord Jesus Christ was living visibly upon the earth, He gave definite instruction on this point. He said: "Have ye not read that He who made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, for this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder." *For this cause*, — that is, for the reason

that mankind were created male and female — they are to live two by two, man and wife, joined in the holy bonds of marriage. This is the true order of their being, the divine law of their mutual relationship. If we ask why it is so, the answer should not be difficult to find. In the first place, the institution of marriage lies at the foundation of social order and happiness. With it are indissolubly associated the ideas of family and home. By means of it human beings are brought into the world under the conditions most favorable to their development and progress. The marriage of one man with one woman conduces to these good results; but it was also designed to accomplish very much more. It was intended to be a spiritual as well as a natural covenant, — a constant source of the deepest and purest joys of mind and heart.

That men and women are capable of entering into a relationship of this kind, follows from the fact that they are endowed with such essentially different natures. The union of husband and wife should be a union of souls. The one possesses mental and spiritual qualities which the other lacks, or does not possess in the same manner or degree. For which reason they can be of the greatest possible service to each other. When they are truly united, their two minds are, as it were, but one mind. They understand each other's thoughts, and are responsive to each

other's feelings ; and what the one loves best the other also loves best. No man can fail to see that such a relationship as this must be one of the most powerful of all agencies in promoting the spiritual and eternal welfare of those who enjoy its advantages and its delights. It is one of the Lord's chosen means of carrying out his cherished purpose of establishing a heaven of angels from among men. Toward it unmarried persons should look as a precious object of desire. That is to say, it should be the effort and prayer of all those who have not yet entered into the marriage relation, to set before them this highest ideal, and to seek no other union than that which rests on the basis of spiritual nearness and sympathy.

A firm belief in the divine providence of the Lord, as extended over the least particulars of the life of every human being, must carry with it the conviction that marriage was not designed to be a hap-hazard arrangement, wholly dependent on the doubtful issue of fortuitous circumstances, but that individual men and women are created and born with a special fitness for each other. Every young man may rightly feel that there is in the opposite sex some one person above all others, the stream of whose life may be mingled with his own to their greatest mutual benefit and satisfaction. This is, indeed, the simple unperverted instinct of all pure-minded youth. When it appears that the beloved one is found, there

comes a feeling of assurance that her place could be filled by no one else in the wide world. Subsequent experience may strengthen this conviction or prove it baseless. The selfish desires of unregenerate hearts brought into close contact, the indulgence of sinful passions or the predominating influence of worldliness may weaken or destroy it. But the love of one, and one alone, is nevertheless a heaven-born feeling, implanted in all human souls by the very law of their creation. Be it remembered, moreover, that whether a marriage results happily or otherwise to the parties concerned in it, it is a compact which has been made for better or for worse, as long as this natural life shall last, and is never to be broken on any other ground than that which is implied in this precept of our Lord: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery."

One more inference is to be drawn from the doctrine that the distinction of sex is fundamental, and pervades the entire nature of a human being and that is, that it will continue forever. In the future life man will not cease to be man, and woman will not cease to be woman. The masculine mind will still be masculine, and the feminine mind will still be feminine. There will also be the same adaptability of the one to the other. Nor can we doubt that the saying will be fully verified, "What God hath joined to-

gether let not man put asunder." But do not the Scriptures teach the opposite of this? If not, how are we to understand the Lord's declaration that "in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage?" My answer is, that the saying means exactly what those who heard the Lord speak, and to whom He was replying, would naturally suppose it to mean. They were the Sadducees, the most worldly-minded of the Jews, the sceptics and materialists of their time, whose habit of thought is sufficiently attested by the question they had just asked respecting the seven brethren who successively took the same woman to wife. It is literally and exactly true that in the other life there can be no marrying or giving in marriage, in any sense in which it would be possible for the Sadducees to understand it. It is equally true that in heaven there can be no such thing as marriage in the common acceptation of the term at this day. Human destiny cannot there be decided by a custom which on earth allows a father to bestow his child on whomsoever he will, regardless of her wishes (this is meant by giving in marriage), or permits two persons, by virtue of a certain ceremony, to live together in the most intimate of all relations, on the basis of mere worldly comfort and expediency (which, generally, is meant by marrying). But to say, on the authority of the passage referred to, that hereafter all sexual

distinction will be blotted out, that every sweet and tender relation which springs from it will come to an end, and that there will be no pure love between man and woman, whereby two souls and two lives are blended in one, no realization of that divine law by which man is made a more perfect image and likeness of his Maker, — is to draw from it altogether too sweeping deductions.

The New Church doctrine on this subject is in full accord with the intuitive feelings and perceptions of men. All true affection has in itself the distinct assurance of its immortality. No husband and wife who are held together by the bond of deep interior sympathy can ever be made to feel that in the life to come they are to be to each other nothing but acquaintances. Listen to the testimony of Charles Kingsley. Speaking of the verse which we have been considering, in relation to marrying and giving in marriage, he says: "Matthew xxii. 30, has been to me always a comfort. I am so well and really married on earth, that I should be exceedingly sorry to be married again in heaven, and it would be very needless. All I can say is, if I do not love my wife, body and soul, as well there as I do here, then there is neither resurrection of my body nor of my soul, but of some other, and I shall not be I." Again, in a letter to his wife, his language is; "In heaven they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God. And

how are the angels of God in heaven? Is there no love among them? If the law which makes two beings unite themselves, and crave to unite themselves, in body, soul, and spirit, be the law of earth — of pure humanity — if, so far from being established by the fall, this law has been the one from which the fall has made mankind deflect most in every possible way; if the restoration of purity and the restoration of this law are synonymous; if love be of the spirit, — the vastest and simplest exercise of will of which we can conceive, — then why should not this law hold in the spiritual world as well as in the natural? In heaven they neither marry nor are given in marriage; but is not marriage the mere approximation to a unity which shall be perfect in heaven? Read what Milton says of angels' love in books vi. and vii., and take comfort. What if many have been alone on earth? May they not find their kindred spirit in heaven, and be united to it by a tie still deeper than marriage? And shall we not be reunited in heaven by that still deeper tie?"

This is in exact agreement with the doctrine presented in Swedenborg's writings. In every unperverted nature is implanted a desire for conjunction with one of the other sex, who shall be, as it were, a second self, that may be loved unselfishly. What may be called the conjugial principle (the word "conjugial" being always

used by Swedenborg in preference to the more common term "conjugal") is the inheritance of us all. A most important work for each one is to preserve it in himself pure and undefiled. It points ever to a spiritual union with one husband or one wife in the other world, if not in this, and points away from all lower and grosser ideas of the sexual relation. It looks through time to eternity. As one of the Lord's best gifts to men, it is in its essence wholly pure and chaste. But how terribly it may be perverted, all history and experience but too plainly show. No one needs to be told what a large share of human misery comes from the degradation and abuse of that conjugial principle which was designed to be the source of man's highest happiness. In thought and feeling, no less than in deed and word, we must strive to shun all impurity as sin against God.

> "Who is the happy husband? He
> Who, scanning his unwedded life,
> Thanks Heaven, with a conscience free,
> 'T was faithful to his future wife."

It rests with every adult person, whether man or woman, young or old, married or single, to choose his position with respect to this matter, by deciding whether he will cherish in his heart this noblest principle of his nature, or, by sinking down into the slough of naturalism and worldliness, suffer the precious jewel to be lost.

No small incentive toward spiritual progress is afforded by the knowledge that just in proportion as any one sets before him his loftiest ideal of holy marriage, and is true to it in his life, it will become to him in heaven a living reality and a joy forever.

The book in which Swedenborg treats of the subject under consideration is divided into two parts. The first and principal part is entitled "The Delights of Wisdom Concerning Conjugial Love," and sets forth the doctrine which I have endeavored briefly to expound. The second part deals with the perversions and abuses of conjugial love, which are coupled in the title with "pleasures of insanity." They are spoken of as altogether evil; but because a distinction is made among them, and some of them are presented as less grievous than others, and as the means of keeping sensual men from falling into still lower deeps, and thus as being in a certain sense permissible, it has been hastily inferred that Swedenborg opens the door to license. Nothing could be farther from the truth. In what he says on the dark side of the question there is doubtless much true philosophy and practical wisdom; of which, it must be confessed, the world stands greatly in need. But the only teaching which he holds out for the direct personal guidance of Christian men and women

walking in the way to heaven, is that of the exalted nature and inviolable sanctity of marriage as one of the principal agencies ordained by the Creator for promoting human happiness here and hereafter.

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